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**SOUVENIR**  
**THIRD ANNUAL CONGRESS**  
**OF**  
**THE EPIGRAPHICAL SOCIETY OF INDIA**

March, 25, 26 & 27 - 1977



**Rashtrakavi Govinda Pai Samshodhana Kendra,**  
Mahatma Gandhi Memorial College Campus, Udupi.

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## EDITORIAL

*We are happy to bring out this souvenir on the historic occasion of the third Annual Congress of the Epigraphical Society of India which is being held in Mahatma Gandhi Memorial College, Udupi, under the auspices of the Rashtrakavi Govind Pai Samshodhana Kendra. Udupi has already earned a name as a centre of learning and this Congress will give further impetus to the pursuit of scholarship. The recognition of the Rashtrakavi Govind Pai Samshodhana Kendra for doctoral research has been closely followed by this Congress of all India importance and this augurs well for the Kendra.*

*We are sure that the learned articles printed in this volume will contribute a good deal to the study and interpretation of the history of Karnataka in general, and of South Kanara in particular.*

*We are grateful to the scholars for the articles they have contributed. The Advertisers deserve our grateful appreciation. We thank M/s. Manipal Power Press for the prompt and neat execution of the printing work.*

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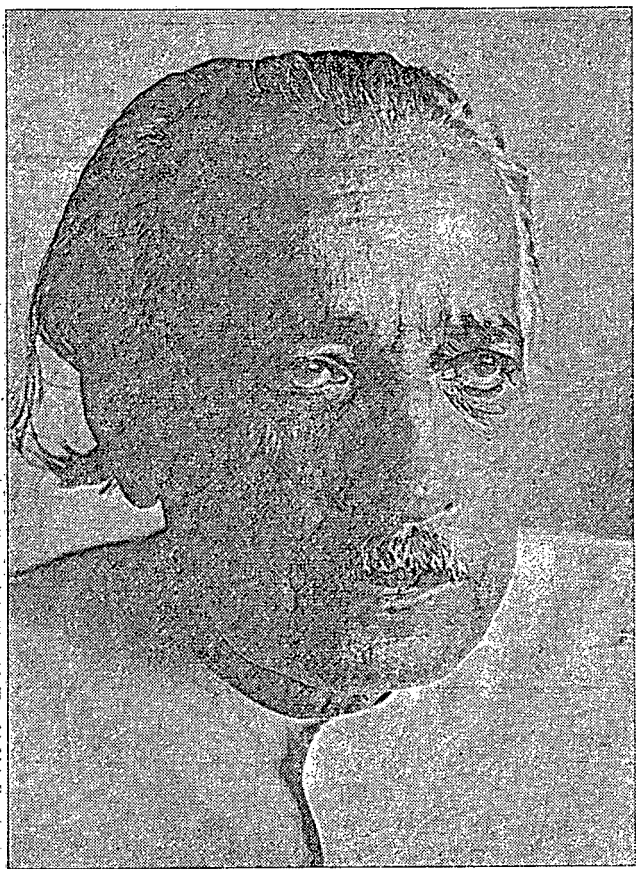


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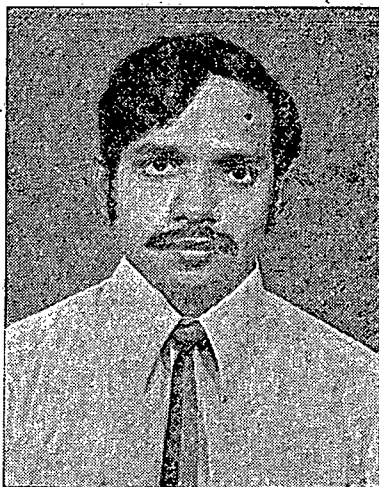
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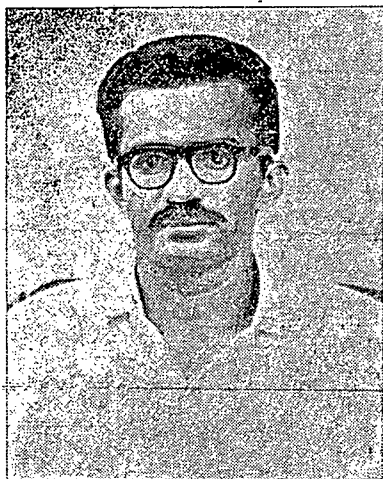
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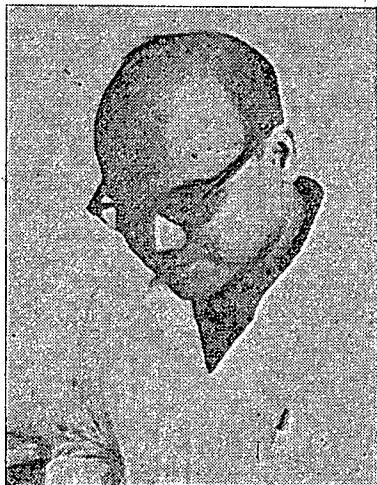
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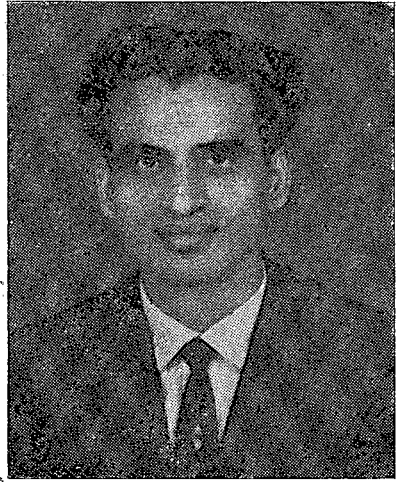
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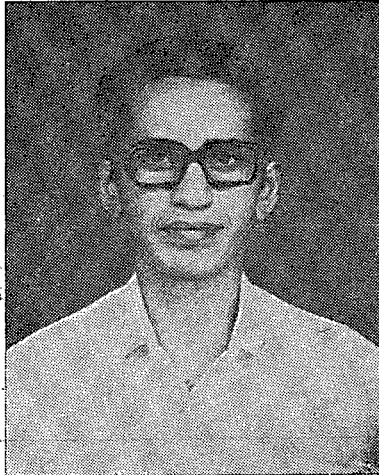
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**THIRD ANNUAL CONGRESS  
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*by*

**Dr. T. V. MAHALINGAM,**  
PROESSOR OF ANCIENT HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY (RETD.)  
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I am very happy to find myself in your midst today and deem it a great honour and privilege to have been elected by the Executive Committee of the Epigraphical Society of India as the General President of this, its third session. This high office was held during the last two years respectively by Dr. B. Ch. Chhabra and Dr. D. C. Sircar, whose contributions to Indian epigraphical studies are so well known to all of us. Though a devoted student of Indian History and Epigraphy I make no claim to specialisation or intensive research in Epigraphy. So please do not deem me conventional when I say I am deeply conscious of my limitations and feel not a little embarrassed to preside over this session. However, I have accepted the invitation for the opportunity it gives me to think aloud before you all, what I feel about the epigraphical studies in India, past, present and future and share my thoughts with you. I am particularly happy that this session is being held at this sacred city of Udupi which has captured our imagination and religious impulses on account of its association with the name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa who fills a large place in Hindu religion, mythology and legends; it is also the city from which the great spiritual teacher Madwāchārya propagated and spread the philosophical school of Dualism and established a number of *maṭhas* for the purpose. It is quite appropriate that this Congress is meeting under the auspices of the Govinda Pai Memorial Research Institute. It gives us an occasion to remember with gratitude and pay our homage to a great scholar who has, by his learned writings, enriched our knowledge of South Indian History and Culture.

## ARCHIVAL SCIENCE

The source material for the study of history is of two kinds, literary and non-literary. The non-literary source material is itself of different types and in dealing with one of them two words, 'archives' and 'documents' are used. The first word, which is in the plural, is taken to mean a place where public records relating to the day-to-day activities of the government, quasi-government, private organisations and institutions, great families and important individuals are preserved. The word is also used in the sense of a document which itself means any writing or inscription which furnishes evidence regarding events or incidents either of a historical or of a private

nature. Though both the words are used generally in a restricted sense and the expression 'archival science' is considered to be comparatively new to our country what they really mean and suggest is very old. No country with any stable and continuous history can be without records or documents, and sufficient care should have been taken to preserve them for reference and use at a later date, though their nature and value may vary from country to country and age to age. It is known that Greece in ancient Europe had its archives. The Athenians preserved their records relating to treaties and laws of assembly in the temple of the Mother of the Gods. The Romans had their archives. The Church in Europe and the Papacy in Italy took great care to build up and maintain their archives. After the Renaissance, with the growth of nation states in Europe and the invention and development of printing, useful archives were built up by them in printed material. Among the countries in Asia there is evidence to show that ancient China had its archives in which the documents of the country written on silk pieces were kept.

### ANCIENT INDIAN ARCHIVES

The Secretariat of the kingdoms in ancient India had each an 'archives' section in which the originals of the public documents were preserved. Such documents which must have been drafted by the government and written on perishable material like cloth, palmleaf, birch bark, hide, wood, etc., and kept in safe custody would have been the proto-type or precursor of the modern archives. Ancient Indian sources, literary and epigraphical, contain references to offices and officers connected with records and documents. Some of the terms we come across in contemporary inscriptions to prove the above are *Akshapaṭala*, *Akshapaṭalika*, *Pustakapāla*, *Lekika*, *Śāsanāchārya*, etc. The Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsang, who visited India during the days of Harshavardhana was struck by the archives in different parts of India and their custodians. According to him the records included official annals 'recording good and evil events with calamities and fortunate occurrences'. The *Rājatarangīni* of Kalhaṇa which contains a comprehensive history of Kāshmir from its legendary beginnings to his own period (eleventh century A.D.) mentions that its author wrote his work on the basis of, among others, the old documents available to him from the archives of the state. The Kumbalgadh inscription of c.A.D. 1450 says that its author had before him, among others, numerous old inscriptions for consultation. Mention may be made here of the *Lekhapaddhati*, a compilation of documents and letters, the original copies of which were available to the compilers at Patan in Gujarat so late as the fifteenth century. The existence of a record office or 'archives'

at Vijayanagar is shown by its description by Abdur Razzak, the Persian ambassador at the court of its king Dēvarāya II (A.D. 1422-46). Moreover, the *praśastis* in many of our inscriptions of all periods, particularly from South India, which contain information about the history and achievements, usually of the immediate predecessors of the kings, show clearly that the practice of maintaining records of the achievements of the earlier kings existed. Particular mention may be made here of the *praśasti* section of the grants of the Eastern Chāḷukya kings from the reign of Gunaga Vijayāditya III. These grants in their preamble give the reign period of each of the earlier rulers as also briefly their achievements in chronological order.

Besides these state archives there were records and documents of a local nature under the custody of local officials. Such records were like many of those issued by the kings and their subordinates engraved on the walls of temples. The originals of the records, which were in the custody of the local officers and organisations, have disappeared like the ones in the 'archives' of the governments of different dynasties on account of the perishable nature of the material used for recording them. Sometimes office copies of even copper plate charters were destroyed or carried away by successful invading armies. It was in that way that the Rāshtrakūṭa Record Office was sacked and plundered in A.D. 972 by Siyaka, the Paramāra king. It may be noted that one of the records was a charter of Gōvinda IV, 'the blank side of one of whose plates was used by the Paramāra king Muñja to record a grant of his own'. Fortunately not all the documents are lost. Copies of some original documents which were engraved on the walls of temples and on copper plates are available to us.

These inscriptions or documents are the archival wealth of India. Any one who wants to study the history of the country in detail cannot afford to neglect the inscriptions. Referring to their value James Burgess, nearly a century ago, wrote in the introduction to the first volume of the *Epigraphia Indica* (1892):

"Indian inscriptions, more so even those of any other country, are the real archives of the annals of its ancient history, the contemporaneous witnesses of the events of the men whose deeds they handed down and their authenticity renders them most valuable and deserving of careful record".

## BEGINNINGS OF INDIAN EPIGRAPHY

Indian inscriptions always pose many problems not only on account of their number which increases every day with the find of fresh ones but also on account of the bewildering variety of the scripts and languages used in

them which are an exercise for the palaeographers, epigraphists and linguists. When such is the position even today after more than a hundred years of epigraphical collection and study it is not difficult to imagine the magnitude of the problem which the pioneering Indian epigraphists of the last century beginning with scholars like Charles Wilkins, Troyler, Mill, James Prinsep Cunningham, Radhakantha Sharma, Bhagavanlal Indraji etc., to mention only a few, had to encounter.

It is on account of the success in the decipherment and interpretation of the Aśokan inscriptions that we have been able to discover the personality and achievements of the great Emperor, but for which he would have been lost in legends and rolled up in miracles. But the Aśokan inscriptions do not appear to be the earliest in our country. Even before Aśoka's period writing was known in India and scripts were developing. In the present state of our knowledge, it is believed that at least five or six inscriptions in the early Brāhmī script could be assigned to the centuries immediately before the days of Aśoka. It is generally agreed by epigraphists that the earliest inscription using alphabets so far known in India is the Piprahwa Buddhist vase record (c. 483 B.C.) found in the Basti district of Uttar Pradesh, a little over two centuries before the accession of the great Mauryan Emperor.

## INDUS WRITING

But our views on the antiquity, origin and beginnings of Indian writing, as also its civilization have been revolutionised by the spectacular discoveries made by archaeologists with their spade in the Indus region and their recreation of a whole phase of early Indian culture about which nothing was known till the twenties of the present century. During the last half a century a number of important excavations conducted in Western Panjab (now in Pakistan), Eastern Panjab, Western Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and parts of Saurashtra have brought to light a number of seals and sealings which bear a variety of writings in pictorial form above figures depicted in them. They cover roughly a period of thousand years, c.2,500 B.C. to c. 1,600 B.C. The writings on the seals are in an unknown script and an unknown language.

A lot of literature about their nature and significance has grown during the last fifty years or so and many scriptologists like Langdon Waddell, Gadd, Hrozny, Hunter, Father Heras and S. K. Ray who have worked on them, have expressed different views regarding the nature of the script, whether it was pictographic or ideographic, syllabic or phonetic as also with regard to their language, author and associations with the scripts of a few ancient civilizations. Some scholars have gone to the extent of establishing connections between the Indus Vally script and the writing in the Easter Islands,

considering the striking similarity between them in spite of the distance between the two areas.

In recent years fresh attempts are being made to decipher and interpret the script, in some cases with the help of the computer so as to easily tabulate the signs and form an idea of their frequency and arrangement. One such attempt has been made by a Russian team of scholars (Knorozov, Volcok and Gurov ) which is inclined to assign word value to the signs and which takes the view that the language of the script belonged to the Dravidian family. The second of such attempts is by a team of Finnish scholars of the Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies Copenhagen, led by Prof. A.Parpola which has used the computer in its analysis of the data. According to the earlier view of the Finnish scholars the script was based on the rebus principle; it was logosyllabic and some signs were determinatives and used as ideograms. The signs were taken to stand for homophonous words, or parts of words identifiable with certain Dravidian words or their equivalents from which it is believed that the people who used the script were of the Dravidian stock and the language they spoke was proto-Dravidian. However, they admitted the possibility of Sumerian loan words in them; but they were convinced that Indo-Aryan loan words were not found in them. Later they modified their views and brought out in 1973 the concordance of pairwise sign combinations calculated to 'help in the recognition of the grammatical structure of the language and also in assigning individual signs to definite functional and semantic classes'.

Among Indian scholars who have been working on the problem of the Indus script in recent years mention should be made, among others, of Iravatham Mahadevan, M. V. Krishna Rao and S. R. Rao. Mr. Mahadevan has also made use of computer facilities. According to him about 950 pairwise combinations occur more than once, though not all of them are 'true' pairs. He considers it possible to achieve 'word division' by pursuing this line of enquiry. He would prefer to analyse the inscriptions with reference to the frequency of the occurrence of a particular symbol and its position and study the grammatical features of the language. He has tried to examine the Harappa script which is written from right to left and fix it within the Dravidian linguistic framework.

Mr. M. V. Krishna Rao and Mr. S. R. Rao have tried to interpret the Harappa script within the Sanskritic linguistic framework. Mr. Krishna Rao understands the script of the seals read by him as syllabic, ideographic and monograms. Mr. S. R. Rao is inclined to think that even as the Harappa culture as a whole underwent changes over one thousand years, the large number of signs of the earlier period were reduced to a comparatively smaller number in the late Harappa period and the late Harappans disciplined their script to an alphabetic system. According to him the drastic reduction from 390 (out of which about 40 are basic) Indus signs of the mature Harappa

period (2,500 B.C. to 1,900 B.C.) to 20 basic signs in the late Harappa period (1,900 B.C. to 1,600 B.C.) was itself a great achievement of the Harappans in their last days. In North Syria and Palestine, this process of simplification led to an alphabetic system of writing. The Harappans too might have disciplined their script into an alphabetic system. If so, the best course was to compare the 20 basic signs of the Late Harappa script with the contemporary North Semetic writing. On comparison, it was found that 14 out of 20 signs of the late Harappa script were almost identical with the basic alphabet of early Canaanite (including Phoenician) inscriptions. A few signs of the South Semetic for *p* and *m* (especially the one closer to Brāhmī *ma*) were also found occurring in the late Harappa script. Mr. S. R. Rao feels that it is safer to proceed from the known (Semetic) to the unknown (Late Harappa script) and gives the same phonetic values, as are given to Semetic alphabets to identical Harappa signs.

The views of the above scholars have been examined in recent years by distinguished linguists and archaeologists like Prof. Burrow, Dr. H. D. Sankalia and Prof. B. B. Lal. While examining the interpretation advanced by the Finnish scholars Prof. Burrow thinks that though the 'early form of Dravidian as a language of the Indus people was a distinct possibility, yet the diverse linguistic patterns of the Indian sub-continent existing during those times should be taken into account. Secondly a gap of 2,000 years would change the language even if it is considered that the Harappan language was Dravidian to an extent that it would differ considerably from the existing Dravidian. Therefore to attempt a decipherment based on modern analogies not only makes the methods employed suspect, but such procedures are not likely to take us anywhere near the truth'. The same problem arises with regard to the interpretation of the Indus script as having much to do with the Indo-Aryan languages. Dr. Sankalia feels for instance, "The Indus script and language cannot contain all that is found in the R̥g Vēda, *Purāṇas* and the *Mahābhārata*". Prof. B. B. Lal has critically examined in two papers (unpublished) read respectively at Paris and London, the premises of Mr. S. R. Rao viz., the existence of only 20 basic signs, the use of ligatures, the stages in the evolution of the Harappan script, his comparison of the same with the Semetic, the method of writing from right to left, etc., and feels that it is necessary to have more concrete and detailed evidence to support his theory. I hope that Mr. Rao will work on the subject with concentrated effort during the period of his Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowship and provide more evidence to strengthen his stand besides answering the points raised against his views. \*.

These divergent views on the subject show that the difficult problem of the elusive Indus script does not appear to be so easy of satisfactory solution,

as is assumed to be in the present state of our knowledge of the material. In the examination of this question a few points deserve to be borne in mind. It is very difficult to trace the stages in the disappearance or the transformation or change of the Indus script into any other script of the subsequent period. It may be noted that in the area once covered by the Indus Civilization we find the Kharoshethi script being used from the third century B.C. to the third century A.D. Some of the symbols and signs on the Indus seals and pottery are also found on the Chalcolithic pottery of Western and Central India and the early pottery of the extreme South which have megalithic associations, both being later than the period of the Indus Civilization, showing thereby that there was a continuous tradition that had something to do with the use of the symbols in the original or modified form. Further as Prof. B.B. Lal feels, one has to keep the eyes open to the fact that some of the symbols occur on the Harappan seals on the one hand and in the early Brāhmī alphabets on the other. It requires to be examined if it was a mere coincidence. The evidence of the punch marked coins of North and South India which bear certain symbols that in some respects are similar to some of the writings on the Indus seals have also to be studied in detail. Further a comparative study of all the symbols found on the Indus seal with the *graffiti* marks found on the pottery of later periods may be useful in forming a better idea of the nature of the Indus script. Prof. B.B. Lal has made a good beginning in that line of approach to the study of the question.

To my mind it appears that the problem of the Indus script cannot be easily solved unless one gets a bilingual inscription in the Indus script and the script of a known language. Let us hope that such a bilingual inscription is discovered and the Indus script is deciphered in the same way as the unknown Hieroglyphic writing in ancient Egypt was deciphered by the French scholar

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\* A difficulty in giving a summary of the views of scholars who have worked on the subject is the paucity of publications on it compared with the discussions about it. For the views of the Russian team of scholars we are unable to get details as neither the original publications nor their English summary is easily available. Secondly the results of the study of the script by Mr. Iravatham Mahadevan are yet to be fully published. Mr. S. R. Rao's interpretations and latest full study in book form, I understand, are about to be published, though he has contributed a few articles (published and cyclostyled) on the subject. It is also the case with Prof. B. B. Lal who has read two papers respectively at Paris and London in July, 1973; only cyclostyled copies of the same have been circulated among some scholars.

Champollion in 1822 by reading the famous Rosetta stone inscription with the help of known Greek scripts, though some years earlier Thomas Young was able to recognize the cartouche with the name of Ptolemy in hieroglyphics in the inscription and as the Brāhmī script was deciphered by James Prinsep in 1837 with the help of the Greek scripts, though there were earlier attempts to decipher the script by scholars like Ch. Lassen. For such a bilingual or trilingual inscription one has to seek in Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Near-Eastern countries which were all closely related to one another and had stadial conformity against a common cultural background, though the Harappa culture had a few distinct characteristics. I hope that the team of Indian Archaeological experts who are to visit Afghanistan this year will be fortunate enough to find such a clue in the course of their intensive explorations in that country which is one of the chief 'round-about' for the spread of ancient civilizations. Only such evidence can set at rest all speculations and discussions about the problem in which the whole Indological world is interested.

### EPIGRAPHICAL WEALTH

In the course of the last one century and more some 80,000 inscriptions have been discovered in the country, thanks to the patient labours of the Office of Chief Epigraphist for India and the Departments of Archaeology in the erstwhile princely States and other Organisations; and as said earlier, fresh ones are being brought to notice every year. More than 50,000 among them are from the South covered by the States of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and Maharashtra. Most of them have been written on rocks, boulders and walls of temples, besides copper plates. However, much of our epigraphical wealth is yet to be brought out. Recently some State Departments of Archaeology have begun to survey and collect inscriptions. For instance, the discovery of a number of hero-stone inscriptions from the Dharmapuri district and the Chengam taluk of the North Arcot district, Tamil Nadu by the Department of Archaeology of the State may be referred to here as an example. These inscriptions which belong largely to the Pallava times throw some new light on the early history of the northern part of Tamil Nadu. The names of many overlord kings mentioned in these inscriptions are reminiscent of Pallava names. It is to be noted here that in the inscriptions of the adjacent Kōṅgu country many rulers are mentioned with the names and titles of those of the imperial Chōlas and Pāṇḍyas, though they were not the Chōlas or Pāṇḍyas.

Apart from these inscriptions collected, a number of inscriptions have been recovered from excavations conducted in different parts of the country. A few of such epigraphical finds may be mentioned here.



The excavations at Jagatgram (30 miles to the north-west of Dehra Dun, Uttar Pradesh and within two miles from the rock edict of Aśoka at Kalsi) have yielded an *āśvamedha* site in which one of the bricks contains an inscription of the second half of the third century A.D. According to it a king by name Śilavarman of the *Vrishagana gotra* and who was the sixth in descent from *Pona* or of *Pona (vamśa !)* performed the fourth horse sacrifice. This king who is not known otherwise, belonged to the post Kushāna period and played a good part, probably in association with other dynasties, in bringing about the end of the Kushāna power in North India.

The large scale excavations conducted at Nagarjunakonda have yielded a number of inscriptions with the help of which it has been possible to reconstruct the history of the Ikshvākus of Vijayapuri. In fact, had it not been for them our knowledge of this dynasty would have been very poor.

Excavations at Arikamedu, Alagarai, Uraiyur and Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu have yielded numerous potsherds with inscriptions written in the Tamil Brāhmī script. They have been deciphered and read. The one from Uraiyur is of particular interest on account of the length of the inscription which is in good Tamil. It seems to read *mūlānpēdu antāṇaṇ inru māṇ (dāṇ)*. The potsherd inscription from Kanchipuram reads: *Pūtalasita* and is found near what appears to be a portion of the *pradakṣiṇpaatha* of, probably a Buddhist *Stūpa*. From the nature of its palaeography the two inscriptions may be assigned to the second century A.D.

Excavations at Pauni in the Bhandara district, Maharashtra State, have brought to light the existence of a *Stūpa* at the place, on the railings of which have been found a number of Brāhmī inscriptions ranging from the second century B.C. to the second century A.D.

In the course of the excavations at Skandar near Kabul in Afghanistan have been recovered a marble statue of Umā-Mahēśvara on the pedestal of which is engraved a Sanskrit inscription in late Brāhmī characters which says that a single principle manifested itself in the triple forms of Viṣṇu, Brahma and Mahēśvara. From the stratigraphical location in which such inscriptions have been found their dates may be roughly fixed and may be compared with the palaeography of the inscriptions of the period near about.

Recent explorations at Banavasi have brought to light a stone slab containing an inscription in Prākṛit language and written in Brāhmī script of the second century A.D. The inscription states that it is the memorial stone of the queen of the king Vasiṭhiputa Śiva Siri Pulumāvi.

Chance finds of inscribed material are also not unknown. A recent instance comes from Mathura which has been a fruitful area for the excavators whose spade has ripped open successive cultures dating back to the beginning of the first millennium B.C. Of particular interest to us is the chance find, in the course of the levelling work carried on in a mound near the place called

Govindpuri for the construction of a housing colony, of an image of the Buddha 15 cms high on a pedestal containing an inscription in Brāhmī script dated in the 115th year of the Gupta Era corresponding to A.D. 434-5. The inscription, which falls in the reign of Kumāragupta Mahendrāditya, contains the name of the sculptor Dhīna. The figure is seen with curly hair, elongated earlobes, lotus bud-shaped and half open eyes and a subtle and serene expression on the face. The drapery has exquisite ripple folds in the Gupta style. Chance finds of dated monuments and sculptures are also of interest for the study of epigraphy and palaeography.

While explorations and excavations have been bringing to light several pieces of writing, the legends on coins discovered in different parts of the country form another class of inscriptions. Such legends on coins are also palaeographically important, and many of the coins are dated with the aid of stratigraphy and palaeography of the legends, in the absence of any other evidence.

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It is needless to describe here the value of these inscriptions for the study of history, as they are well known. Epigraphy, besides being the back-bone and life-blood of our history is a regulator of different types of evidence we have for the reconstruction of ancient and medieval Indian history.

The data contained in Indian inscriptions, stone and copper plates, are not of the same nature during the long period of the country's history. Even a cursory study of their contents would show that there was a perceptible change in it from time to time. The early Brāhmī inscriptions from all over India are of a religious character. They register donations, dedications, gifts and endowments, purely of a religious nature. Some Brāhmī records from the natural caverns in Tamil Nadu which may be compared with hundreds of similar ones from Sri Lanka, also mention some personal names, probably the names of their pious donors and donees. It was Aśoka who first thought of the usefulness of inscriptions for purposes other than the purely religious ones. He issued his edicts to propagate his *Dharma* throughout his vast empire. His example was followed by some of the North Indian kings, largely for recording their achievements. The Hathigumpha inscription of Khāravela of Kalinga registers the achievements of the king year-wise; and it is the first of its kind in India. Two more examples of a similar nature are the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta and the Aihole inscription of Pulakeśin II. While the early Brāhmī inscriptions are short and crisp, recording donations, the later inscriptions tend to provide more details giving the name of the reigning king, a dynastic era and also in several

cases a brief *praśasti* prefixed to the main body of the record. When structural temples came into existence in large numbers and worship in temples became popular and common, the additions made to a temple complex, gifts made for various services in the temple, consecration of idols and deities and construction of the temple itself began to be registered on its walls, dating the records in the manner current in the respective areas.

The contents and characteristics of South Indian inscriptions are somewhat different from those of the inscriptions from other parts of our country. In the south cave and structural temples came into existence from the seventh century onwards. The structural temples were multipurpose institutions and served the society in different ways such as by maintaining educational institutions, hospitals, libraries, bank etc., besides serving as places of worship. They were used as places to register important temple transactions, as also the proceedings of the local administrative bodies. The inscriptions so engraved were considered important and hence they were at times, re-engraved when the temples were rebuilt or renovated. Instances are not wanting to show that some compositions of a religious and literary nature also found their place on the walls of the temples.

As in the case of stone inscriptions, the early copper-plate charters are also short and crisp in their contents, engraved on a comparatively small plate or a few plates. The details recorded in them are quite in conformity with the prescriptions of the *Dharmaśāstras*. A tendency of later times to give an elaborate eulogy or *praśasti* of the king and his ancestors led to an enlargement of the size and an increase in the number of the copper-plates. The copper-plate inscriptions available to us for the different epochs contain mainly royal orders regarding grants of lands or villages to individuals or groups of *brāhmaṇas*, a temple, monastery, an educational institution and the like. They usually register a description of the donor-king and a few of his predecessors, description of the donee and his family, details of gift and a learned saying quoted from well-known *Dharmaśāstras*, either emphasizing the merit of such deeds or an imprecatory saying cursing and warning the transgressors of the gift. One interesting feature of the copper-plate inscriptions of all periods and regions is that their phraseology and the drafting procedure are more or less the same. The language of the charters underwent changes in different periods in different regions of the country. Thus Prākṛit, Sanskrit and a local language were the general patterns of change. About the end of the third century A.D., Sanskrit appears to have practically ousted the Prākṛit language from the inscriptions. This change of medium of language to a more grammatically evolved language of the *elite* gave great scope for the composers of the inscriptions, who were often poets of high calibre, to compose verses in praise of their lords. When a local language was given a place in the inscription, Sanskrit was confined to the *praśasti* portion, giving only

a core statement about the deed; and details of the gift were recorded in the local language. Persian and Arabic came to be used in the areas ruled by the Muslim rulers.

## DATING

Likewise, there is development and enrichment of details of date in Indian inscriptions from period to period. The method of recording dates in them has posed one of the most difficult problems of study for Indian epigraphists. Though it may be presumed that the Harappans knew standard weights and measures, it is not known if they had a system of time reckoning. The earliest dated epigraph viz., the Badli inscription mentions the year 84' and it is suggested that the year is counted from the date of the *nirvana* of Vardhamana Mahavira. But this is the only instance of dating found in the inscriptions before the days of Aśoka. The Aśokan inscriptions give the regnal year of the king. The use of the names of three seasons of the year and the eight *pakshas* or fortnights of each season was coming into vogue even from his days. The system of giving the regnal year of the king was followed under the Śuṅgas, Kānvas, and Khāravela of Kalinga and even later, along with other details of date. But from the period of the Śātavāhanas, the regnal year of the king, the season, the order of the fortnight and the number of the day in it are mentioned. Though dating in early Indian inscriptions appears to have been done with reference to the regnal years of the king, regular eras appear to have been introduced into the country in the post-Mauryan period by the foreign dynasties that ruled over north-western India. The day and month are at times given in inscriptions probably on account of the influence of the Macedonian Calendar. The method of giving the regnal year, the continuous era and other details of date was followed under the Guptas from the days of Chandragupta II. Among the details found in many Gupta inscriptions are the year, season, month, fortnight, date and, occasionally, the constellation also. The Huns used their own regnal years along with other details of the Indian system of dating. Though the inscriptions give a picture of gradual enrichment in *pañchāṅga* details, different eras were patronised in different regions, and new eras were adopted from time to time. Some fabricated eras are also quoted side by side with the popular era of the region. The 12 year Jupiter Cycle, the 60-year Jupiter Cycle, the *pañchāṅga* details like the *nakshatra*, *karana*, *yoga*, eclipses, new moon day, full moon day, *āyanas*, etc., are also introduced in different periods in different regions. Thus there is steady increase and definiteness in the inscriptions regarding the dating system.

The nature of the content, composition and method of dating of the inscriptions shows that though there was no unity or purpose influencing the main course of the long history of the country there was great uniformity perceivable in the method followed in such compositions, showing thereby that the faith, beliefs and practices of the people all over the country were practically the same, though there were some changes and differences in them from age to age and region to region.

## EPIGRAPHICAL RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

There is growing interest in our country in the study of our heritage, a study for which scholars would have to consult original sources of information. Our epigraphical wealth is encyclopaedic in nature, containing information about many aspects of our history and culture, and a deep and penetrating study of them will reveal the kaleidoscopic nature of the many facets of the long history of India. But one must admit that, in spite of that and the long stretch of time they cover, nearly 2,000 years or more, the quantum of the real history written in this country is poor, particularly when compared with the historical writing in Europe. The reason for this is not far to seek. Most of the inscriptions in their original are not yet available to the serious student of Indian history. Though nearly 80,000 inscriptions have been noticed in the *Annual Reports on Indian Epigraphy* and other epigraphical publications with reference to their location, dynasty, and script with a short summary of their content the texts of about 65 per cent of them are not easily accessible to scholars. With such bare notices of the inscriptions not much historical research has been possible except the reconstruction of the frame-work of the annals of the dynasties and stories of the rise and fall of major kingdoms. It has not been possible to attempt work on the life of the people which should include among others, a study of the political geography of the different parts of the country (for example such a study has been made of the Political geography of the Chola country between 800 A.D. to 1300 A.D. in the University of Madras), political institutions, social and economic forces and institutions that shaped the society, its complex structure, its industry, trade and commerce, mercantile organisations, agrarian systems, theistic developments in different forms (David N. Lorenzen's *The Kapalikas and Kalamukhas* and R.N. Nandi's *Religious Institutions and cults in the Deccan* seem to be good beginnings in this line of study) and artistic achievements, as also natural and technical sciences like hydraulics and engineering besides medicine, etc. (While mentioning the need for a study of the inscriptions for such subject one's attention is drawn to a paper on 'Sources for a History of Plant Sciences

in India (I.Epigraphy)' by Dr.B.G.L.Swamy based on the available epigraphical evidence.

Moreover, inscriptions in different languages can be grouped and studied for linguistic research. Some good work has been done on it with the help of the available texts of inscriptions. Here mention may be made of the following: In 1950 Jules Bloch analysed the different dialectical variations, phonology, morphology, syntax and vocabulary of the language used in the different versions of the edicts of Aśoka. Mahandale has discussed in his *Historical Grammar of Inscriptional Prakrits* (1948) the linguistic aspects of the language. Dr. Narasimhiah and Dr. G.S. Gai have done similar work on the linguistic aspects of the Kannaḍa inscriptions. While Dr.Narasimhiah's work is based on a study of early Kannaḍa inscriptions of the sixth and seventh centuries A.D., Dr. Gai's work is based on his study of the inscriptions of the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries A.D. in the same language. Mention may also be made of *A Cultural Study of Kannada Inscriptions* 450 A.D. to 1150 A.D. by Dr. M. Chidanandamurthy. Dr. K. Mahadeva Sastri is working on similar lines on the Telugu inscriptions, while Mr. Agastyalingam and Mr. Paneerselvam are studying the early inscriptions in Tamil from the point of view of their linguistics. Recently Dr. A. Velupillai has studied the linguistic aspects of the Pāṇḍya inscriptions. Such studies may be useful for writing historical and comparative grammars of Indian languages used in inscriptions.

Besides intensive work has to be done on the preparation of a glossary of technical terms found in the inscriptions. A good beginning has been made by Dr. D.C. Sircar in this line of research. The late T.N. Subrahmanyam also has done some work in this direction so far as the inscriptions in Tamil are concerned. At the instance of the Karnataka State government Dr. S. H. Ritti of the Karnatak University is preparing a glossary covering the historical geography and different aspects of administrative terms in use in Ancient Kuntala. Similarly the revenue terms found in the Chōḷa inscriptions are being analysed and listed by Dr. Karashima in the Tokyo University, Japan with the help of the computer. Such glossaries may be of much use also to State governments which have decided to use Hindi and the regional languages for purposes of administration.

Substantial work can be done on the above lines only when all the inscriptions so far discovered are available to scholars engaged in this work. I wish that the texts of the epigraphs are published and made available for intensive research as early as possible. This desideratum was expressed so early as 1909 by J. F. Fleet, in his learned contribution on Epigraphy to the second volume of the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*. I may quote his own words.

"There is, thus, plenty of both original research and revisional work still to be done in connexion with, and by the help of, the epigraphic records. And the leading desideratum is,

certainly, to get those records explored more fully and published in larger numbers”.

His appeal requires to be repeated even now.

It is a good trend that supplementing the publication scheme of the Office of the Chief Epigraphist for India other agencies are coming forward to make easily available epigraphical material to scholars. One of them is the project undertaken by the newly formed Indian Council of Historical Research to bring out a series of well arranged volumes of inscriptions relating to several dynasties that ruled over different parts of India. According to this scheme the volumes will include the texts of inscriptions so far published, with their summaries and an historical introduction for the inscriptions of each dynasty, as also maps, and plates of select inscriptions to illustrate the palaeographical evolution of the scripts during the period when the dynasty ruled. These compilations, when completed, will be found very useful for students of Indian history in as much as they will supply epigraphical source material in handy volumes.

One finds that a number of inscriptions copied a few decades ago are not now available in their original places for examination and study if doubts should arise. A recopy of the available ones shows considerable damage done to them which have been roughly handled by individuals and sculptors who rebuild or renovate temples with the same stones. Therefore there is great need for a thorough resurvey of the existing inscriptions. It is a good sign that Governments are taking interest in the preservation of these inscriptions in proper condition. Mention may be made here of a very important project undertaken by the University of Mysore; it is the revision and reprinting of the *Epigraphia Carnatica* volumes published decades ago by the Archaeological Department of Mysore under the guidance of L. Rice. It is a matter for satisfaction that the volumes that are being brought out are not mere reprints of the old volumes but are revised ones in which new records recently found are being included. Each volume contains a fresh introduction by Dr. B. R. Gopal, the epigraphist for the scheme. Above all, the revised volumes are brought out in quick succession.

There is great need for an up-to-date list of Indian inscriptions that have been noticed or published so far. A project for the preparation of such a list was sponsored by the University Grants Commission in 1964 and the work was undertaken regionwise by the Universities of Calcutta, Nagpur, Mysore and Madras. The work relating to the inscriptions in the Tamil Nadu and Kerala States upto A.D.1300 and numbering about 17,000 was undertaken and completed by the Madras University and the same has been taken up for publication by the Indian Council of Historical Research. The work

relating to the inscriptions in the Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh States upto the same period undertaken by the Mysore University, as also those of a number of States of North India undertaken by the Calcutta University, I understand, have been completed. Besides, the preparation of a topographical list of Vijayanagar inscriptions numbering about 9,000 undertaken by Dr. B. R. Gopal and myself for the Indian Council of Historical Research has been recently completed.

I may refer here to the method of the publication of inscriptions. While going through the volumes of the *South Indian Inscriptions* series as also the *Epigraphia Indica* series, one notices frequent changes in the method followed. So far as the volumes of the *South Indian Inscriptions* series are concerned the changes are more frequent. While the first three volumes give the texts of the inscriptions in the respective scripts of the languages and their translation with introduction and notes in English, the next five volumes contain their bare texts in the scripts of the languages of the inscriptions without any introduction, translation or notes, while subsequent volumes contain the texts of inscriptions in the scripts of their languages arranged dynastic or language wise, each inscription having a short introduction-cum-summary in English. It appears that the method last mentioned is easily the most useful, though one may feel that a little more detailed summary may be given separately under each text. In recent years most States have organised their own Departments of Archaeology. Besides, a number of Universities have started Departments of Ancient Indian History and Archaeology and some institutions have come up which are engaged in epigraphical studies and which have their own publication series. One notices that there is no uniformity with regard to the manner or format of their publications whether in full or in a summary form. To be useful to scholars interested in such publications, it is highly desirable that there should be some general uniformity in the editing and publishing of inscriptions, based on an acceptable *proforma* in which each inscription may contain an introduction and summary, preferably in English because such publications are intended not for a linguistic area but for scholars both in India and abroad interested in Indian Epigraphy.

### COMMON SCRIPTS

A sensitive but an important question that I would like to touch upon here is the script that can be used in our epigraphical publications. It is a known fact that language and script are two separate things and it is not difficult to write in any script words in any language except probably a few for which special devices would have to be found out. For instance, if one has to write the Tamil words in the Dēvanāgarī script one will notice that



certain devices would have to be found for providing for short vowels like *e* and *o* and consonants like *ṇa ṇa* and *la* in Tamil. Though there are a number of languages spoken in our country they can be brought under two classes based on their derivation, namely languages based on or derived from either the Sanskrit or Dravidian group, the script of each of which has in the course of ages developed some distinguishing characteristics such as curveilinear, angular, cursive, etc. Attempts have been made from time to time to evolve a common script for the country, some preferring the Dēvanāgarī script, others preferring the Roman script. It is known that in the last century a number of works in the Indian languages both in the North and the South were transliterated and published in the Roman script, particularly by the Christian Missionaries, so as to be able to teach the people who did not know to write though they knew one language or another. This method was preferred since it was not only a matter of convenience but also a means by which the integration of the whole country could be achieved through script. It may be mentioned that Sir William Jones was a great supporter of this move.

In 1961 a Conference of Chief-Ministers of the Indian States discussed this question and came to the conclusion that in order to promote national integration it was desirable to have one common script for all the languages spoken in the country and that the Dēvanāgarī script would be good. But no final decision has been taken by the Government on the question. At the same time thought has been bestowed on the question of minor reforms with regard to the alphabets themselves to avoid regional variations and to produce some standardisation in them. The Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh governments gave some serious thought to the question of the reform of the Dēvanāgarī script and produced Reports with concrete suggestions supported by charts for such a reform. Regarding the scripts of the Dravidian languages suggestions are being made for the amalgamation of the Telugu and Kannada scripts. Nearly two decades ago the Kannada Sahitya Parishad proposed such an amalgamation. Recently the Minister for Education in Andhra Pradesh announced in his Presidential Address at the Sixth All India Conference of Dravidian Linguists held a few months ago at Visakhapatnam that the governments of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka were seriously thinking of constituting an inter-state committee to evolve a common script for Telugu and Kannada both of which have a number of common characteristics. But similar thought does not seem to have been given to evolve a common script for Tamil and Malayalam, between the scripts of which there is much closeness. A common script for both of them is not impossible.

But to us students of Indian epigraphy it is worth serious consideration if inscriptions in a particular language cannot be made easily readable by those who know the language, but not its script. On this difficult question

an idea strikes me. The inscriptions in Sanskrit and the Sanskrit based languages may be printed uniformly in the Dēvanāgarī script with a key to indicate the regional variations in them and those in the Dravidian languages may be printed in the Roman script with necessary diacritical marks to make it easy for interested scholars to read and pronounce the words correctly. This is not altogether a new idea, however, for it is followed in the *Epigraphia Indica* and accepted for the proposed epigraphical publications of the Indian Council of Historical Research.

## FUTURE EPIGRAPHISTS

It is not out of place here to say a few words about the epigraphists to come. Even after a century of intensive epigraphical collection and study neither the collection nor their utilization for the reconstruction of our history has been appreciable. Therefore, we are in more need of a good number of epigraphists and palaeographers in the coming years. Out of the hundred and odd Universities in India, about twenty five Universities have provision for courses in Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology at the M.A. level in which epigraphy is one of the subjects taught. But in many of them the subject is being done only as a means of showing that epigraphy supplies source material for the study of history. It is only in a few Universities that the subject is done at the M.A. level, as it should be, to give a good grounding to students in the subject; it is being taught as an independent branch of study and students are trained to decipher inscriptions and transcribe them as is done in the Andhra University and the Ceylon University in Sri Lanka. It is only that kind of training that will be helpful to shape the students in such a way that they will take to epigraphical studies with interest and enthusiasm. In the alternative Post-graduate Diploma courses in Epigraphy running to at least one year, as is done in the Karnatak University, Dharwar and the State Department of Archaeology, Tamil Nadu, so far as I know, may help to learn the fundamentals of epigraphy and palaeography. I would like to suggest the teaching of Sanskrit and also a Dravidian language other than one's mother tongue along with epigraphy; this will go a long way in understanding the nature of Indian inscriptions and give a good grounding to budding epigraphists. It is also desirable that research topics, both in the epigraphy and palaeography, are given to students aspiring for research degrees to promote the study of both these subjects. For this the Office of the Chief Epigraphist for India and also the State Departments of Archaeology should liberalise their rules for making available epigraphical material to *bona fide* research scholars and investigators working on research projects

so that more research can be done in them. After all, the material is intended for the use of scholars.

## **EPIGRAPHIST, HISTORIAN AND LINGUIST**

Epigraphy, which includes palaeography, has developed into a science by itself and one gets mastery over it with the necessary equipment, namely in language and linguistics on one side and history on the other side. With the growth of the corpus of epigraphical material there is growth in hair splitting discussion on its study and interpretation. Though epigraphy is an interesting subject by itself and one must acquire mastery over it for expanding one's knowledge of the history of our country, it is equally true that even for a proper understanding of the content of the inscriptions a fair knowledge of the history of the country is indispensable. It must be borne in mind that without a good grounding in our ancient lore and history, at least in outline, it is not easy to understand and interpret the inscriptions correctly. If one may say so, Epigraphy is a means to an end and not an end in itself. The historian depends on the epigraphist for correct information and the epigraphist depends on the historian and linguist for proper interpretation. There is great need for co-operation among the three for the purposeful study of epigraphy. In this coordinated endeavour the numismatist has also a share, for the legends on the coins have something to add to our knowledge of the palaeographical trends in a period.

## **THE SOCIETY'S WORK**

The main objectives of the Epigraphical Society of India are at present to bring together all those who are interested in the pursuit, promotion and furtherance of epigraphical studies and research, arrange for the Indian Epigraphical Congress annually and bring out a Journal devoted to Epigraphy. I would suggest for the consideration of the authorities of our Society that it may arrange, on the occasion of its annual session, a seminar on a chosen topic relating to Indian inscriptions in the same way as the Numismatic Society of India and Archeaological Society of India do at their annual sessions. That will give an opportunity and incentive to epigraphical scholars to think of specific problems in epigraphy and discuss them at a meeting from the point of view of date, palaeography, orthography, historical value, etc.

Friends, one word more and I shall have finished. In recent years we notice a good lot of enthusiasm for epigraphy and epigraphical studies in our country. There is a growing recognition of the importance of the subject

as a discipline in Universities. The Epigraphical Society of India has not come a day too soon. Its objectives are good, and one wishes that it gets the support of not only scholars interested and engaged in the subject but also that of Universities, institutions devoted to Indological studies and the Union and State governments. This nascent organization should stabilise itself and work for the promotion of epigraphical studies and research as a mission. We must work with a singleness of purpose and in a spirit of co-operation and dedication. If we are able to work upto this ideal and do something to the cause of epigraphy that would be the greatest service we can render not only to the subject but also to a proper understanding of our heritage and culture.

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# A HISTORY OF SOUTH KANARA

Dr. K. V. RAMESH

Though as early as in 2nd century A.D. itself Ptolemy, the great geographer, refers to South Kanara as Olokhoira (Āluva-khēḍa), it is only towards the middle of the 5th century that the Tuḷu country comes into proper historical limelight. The early Āḷupa rulers began their career as the vassals of the Kadambas of Banavāsi and went about steadily increasing their political stock. During the 7th-8th centuries they flourished as honoured allies of the powerful Vātāpi-Chalukya emperors; their most powerful ruler Chitravāhana I (680-730 A.D.) actually became the son-in-law of the Chalukya emperor Vinayāditya. During those momentous days the Āḷupas were masters of a wide territory which included besides their ancestral possession of South Kanara the vast territorial division called Kadamba-maṇḍala. Following the downfall of the Chalukyas the Āḷupas served for some time as the feudatories of the Rāshtrakūṭas and were also for a brief span the vassals of the Pallavas of the Kāñchi.

From about the middle of the 10th century onwards the Āḷupa rulers of South Kanara began to enjoy a status of political freedom resulting more from the indifference shown towards them by the imperial powers of the South than due to their own prowess. Among the medieval Āḷupas who contributed substantially to the political and cultural life of Karnataka during the 10th-13th centuries A.D. Kundavarma, (c. 950-80 A.D.), Baṅkidēva I (1020-50 A.D.), Kavi Āḷupēndra (1110-60 A.D.), Kulaśekhara I (1160-1220 A.D.), Virapāṇḍya Dēva (1250-75 A.D.) and his queen Ballamahādēvi (1275-92 A.D.) deserve special mention. For about 10 years (c. 1010-20 A.D.) South Kanara was under Chōḷa occupation and the credit for liberating the Tuḷu country from foreign domination goes to Baṅkidēva I.

In 1333 A.D. when Sōyidēva was sitting on the Āḷupa throne the Hoysāḷa ruler Ballāḷa III invaded South Kanara and occupied parts of the Tuḷu country. In 1345 A.D., even while the Āḷupa and Hoysāḷa powers were holding sway over South Kanara the district became part of the fast expanding Vijayanagara empire. From then for about 3 years the Tuḷu country was actually under the sway of three mutually unrelated powers, those of the weakened Āḷupas and Hoysāḷas and the resurgent Vijayanagara power. While the Hoysāḷa

sway over the district came to an end in 1348 A.D. the Ālupas appear to have lingered on till the very end of the 14th century.

When South Kanara became part of the Vijayanagara empire in 1345 A.D. its political isolation and independence ended once for all. The Vijayanagara emperors divided the district into two major divisions called the Bārakūru-rājya and Maṅgaḷūru-rājya and appointed governors to administer these territories. Side by side with this all powerful imperial hegemony there were also in that region a number of minor chieftaincies such as those of the Kaḷasa-Kārkaḷa, Nagine, Hāḍu-vaḷli, Ajila, Toḷaha, Chauṭa, Sāmanta, Nāḷina, Kunda-heggaḍe, Baṅga, Madda-heggaḍe, Kinnika-heggaḍe etc. These minor chieftains were actively involved in the day-to-day administration of the district and inscriptions of the period reveal many instances of co-operation as well as conflicts between them and the imperial officers on the one hand and between themselves on the other. During the reign of Sadāśvarāya the Tulu country was given away as perpetual fief to Keḷadi Sadāśivanāyaka in 1554 A.D. and the latter and his successors put an end before long to most of the local ruling houses. Even after the empire of Vijayanagara had lost much of its glory and strength as a result of the fateful battle of Rakkasataṅgaḍi in 1565 A.D. South Kanara continued to form a part of Keḷadi kingdom whose allegiance to the designated Vijayanagara empire by then had become a matter of mere formality.

It may be mentioned in passing that the borders of the Tulu country had extended somewhat beyond the present day borders of the South Kanara district particularly in the north and the east. It was only in 1860 that the British administration carved out the present district and gave it the name of South Kanara.

Religious developments in South Kanara have had an abiding influence on the political and cultural history of that region. Egraphical evidence makes it clear that right from the 7th century A.D. onwards Śaivism has been the most consequential religious faith of the people of the region. From the 13th century onwards Jainism, which appears to have been introduced in the region slightly earlier took rapid strides largely owing to the patronage extended by a number of local ruling families. The post-Madhvacharya period witnessed the rapid growth of Vaishṇavism as another important religious force of the Tuluvas. A careful examination of the many hundred inscriptions which are known to exist in the district bring into proper focus the crucial and abiding role played by these religious faiths in building up certain aspects of Tuluva character which are marked deviations from the normal run in Karnataka.

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# EVOLUTION OF SCRIPTS IN INDIA

Dr. G. S. GAI

When one considers the question of evolution of scripts in India, one has to begin the story from the Aśokan Brāhmī script of the 3rd century B.C. since regular evolution can be traced from this period. No doubt the discovery of Indus Civilization in 1921-22 and the Indus Seals containing writing pushed back the history of writing in this sub-continent at once to the third millennium B.C. But, although more than half a century has elapsed since then, no final word has been said so far regarding the decipherment of this script. Attempts are also being made by scholars like Shri S. B. Rao, to connect this script with the Aśokan Brāhmī script in spite of the wide gap of about 1500 years.

We find that the script used by emperor Aśoka in his many edicts is a fully developed one. In the words of Sir Isaac Taylor this script is "bold, simple, grand, complete, easy to remember, facile to read and difficult to mistake."<sup>1</sup>

Such a developed script must have evolved from some earlier script but, unfortunately, we have no evidence of this earlier script discovered so far. While some scholars attribute the origin of this Brāhmī script to foreign sources, others consider it of indigenous origin. Another script, known as wharōshthī, was used in Aśokan edicts found at Bansehra and Shahbazgarhī, now in Pakistan, and later in the records of the Kushan king, of this area and was prevalent upto Mathura region in the south. It was also used in some manuscripts in Central Asia during the later period and then disappeared from use. This Kharōshthī script did not give rise to any other script in India or elsewhere and hence had no evolution unlike the Brāhmī script.

It is wellknown to all the scholars of Indian Epigraphy that this Aśokan Brāhmī script of the 3rd century B.C. is the mother of all the modern Indian scripts prevalent in North India as well as South India and also of most of the scripts in South-East Asia.

The standard form of Aśokan Brāhmī script is best illustrated in the Rummindei Pillar edict.<sup>2</sup> Some earlier scholars were of the opinion that there were regional differences in the execution of the Aśokan Brāhmī inscriptions. But recent scholars hold the view that there are no regional varieties in this script, that there is only one imperial style of Aśokan Brāhmī script

and that the changes in the forms noticed are due to engraver's individual mannerisms or characteristics. A characteristic feature of this Aśokan Brāhmī and its derived scripts is that the medial *a* is inherent in the consonant letters like *ka*, *kha*, etc. While medial *ā*, *i*, *u*, etc. are indicated by separate strokes, hooks, loops, etc. attached to these consonants. In Bhaṭṭiprolu casket inscriptions<sup>3</sup>, however, medial *a* is indicated by the Aśokan Brāhmī *a* while medial *a* is marked by a horizontal stroke.

The next stage in the development of the Brāhmī script is found in the Nāgārjuni Hill Cave inscriptions of Daśaratha, grandson of Aśoka, the characteristic of which is the reduction of the height of the vertical strokes. This characteristic is noticed in the later inscriptions also. The next step in the development is found in the inscriptions of the Kshatrapas and the Kushanas. The main features of the letters in these records are the equalisation of the upper verticals and the use of angular forms for *gha*, *pa*, *ma*, etc.

The script of the Kushāna period (2nd, 3rd cent. A.D.) is considered as the parent of the later northern script of the Gupta period (4th to 6th cent. A.D.) According to scholars like Dani, the use of new tools gives rise to new styles of writing and the Śakas introduced a new technique of writing in the middle of the 1st cent. A.D. By the use of this new writing tool, a broad or edged pen, dagger-shaped letters—a thick top and gradual thinning downward were formed. By the use of such a tool, the top-head is naturally formed for the letters while in the further development of this style, there is deliberate marking of the head called 'serif'. And this 'serif' developed into full head line and ultimately we get the continuous top-line in Nāgarī script. It may be pointed out, in this connection, that while Aśokan Brāhmī script is the creation of the royal scribes, the inscriptions of the later periods include royal private and individual kinds.

From the sixth century onwards, the inscriptions of North India, show the characteristic, in the evolution of the script, which is called 'acute-angle alphabet' by some scholars and 'nail-headed' script by others. This script is also called Siddhamātrikā, a term used by Alberuni in the 10th century A.D. A further progress of this script during the period 8th to 10th century A.D. led to the development of the Nāgarī script, the characteristic of which, as observed above, is the substitution of the straight top-strokes for the wedges on the vertical letters. From 11th century onwards, Nāgarī script becomes widely prevalent in the whole region north of the Vindhyas.

The Southern script developed out of the characters used in the inscriptions of the Western Kshatrapas, Sātavāhanas and Ikshvākus in the territory south of the Vindhyas. According to certain peculiarities, the southern alphabets are divided into (1) Western variety used in the inscriptions of Gujarat and portions of Mahārāshṭra belonging to the period 400 A.D. to 900 A.D. (2) Central Indian variety found in portions of Madhya Pradesh



and Maharashtra in the inscriptions of the kings of Śarabhapura, Kōsala and Vākātakas. One of the chief characteristics of these records is that the heads of the letters have small squares which resemble small boxes and hence called 'box-headed', some records of the Kadamba family in Karnatak show this characteristic script; (3) Telugu-Kannaḍa script found in Karnataka portions of Mahārāshṭra and Āndhra Pradesh used in the inscriptions of the Kadambas, Western Gangas, Western and Eastern Chālukyas, Rāshṭra-kūṭas, later Chālukyas, Yādavas, Hoysalas and Vijayanagara kings. One of the chief characteristic features of this script is the roundish form of the letters. Upto the end of the Vijayanagara period in the 16th century A.D., inscriptions in Kannada and Telugu areas used the common script after which they began to develop individual characteristics noticed in modern Kannada and Telugu scripts. The Telugu-Kannada scripts also adopted certain letters to represent the special sounds of the language like rough *r* and *l*; (4) the later Kalinga script used in the copper plate grants of the Eastern Gaṅgas in parts of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh. This script is an admixture of Central Indian, Western and Southern scripts; and lastly (5) Tamil, Vaṭṭeḷuttu and Grantha scripts used in the inscriptions of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Grantha script is used in the Sanskrit records of the Pallavas, Chōlas and Pāṇḍyas and also for the use of Sanskrit words in Tamil inscriptions.

The above brief survey would show how the Aśokan Brāhmī script developed into all the later scripts in different parts of the country. And all the modern scripts in India, except Roman and Urdu scripts, are derived from one of the branches or varieties of these scripts.

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1. Taylor, *The Alphabet*, Vol. II, p. 289.
  2. *Corp., Ins. Ind.*, Vol. I (1925), p. 164.
  3. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. II, pp. 323 ff.

## RECENT EPIGRAPHICAL DISCOVERIES IN KARNATAKA

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Karnataka occupies a place of pride in the world of epigraphical studies. Hundreds of inscriptions are reported every year in Karnataka by the universities and the office of the Chief Epigraphist. These discoveries have added considerably to our knowledge of Karnataka history and culture. It is proposed to examine here the most significant epigraphical discoveries of recent times in Karnataka.

From the point of view of chronology, the Banavasi inscription of Śiva Śiri Pulumāvi occupies the first place. It was discovered in Banavasi in front of the Madhukēśvara temple when the Archaeological Survey of India was doing active clearance work in the area.<sup>1</sup> The inscribed slab is very artistic and contains a *Chaitya* motif. The language of the inscription is Prakrit. It is written in Brahmi script of the second century A.D. The script is ornamental and resembles that of Nagarjunakonda and Jaggayyapeta. However, the flourish of the writing is not so developed as in the Ikshvāku records.

The inscription mentions that a memorial stone was set up for the queen of Vasiṭhiputa Śiva Śiri Pulumāvi. First of all, this is the first inscription of this king who was otherwise known to us from *Puranas* and coins. Secondly, it makes it clear that this king was not Śiva Śiri Sātakarni as some scholars thought. In fact he is Pulumāvi III, and twentyfifth Śātavahana king. The coins of this king could not be ascribed accurately but it can be done now in the light of the present record. From the palaeographical date of this record the date of this king can also be fixed. It also throws light on the Śātavahana rule in Karnataka. This record proves that North Kanara formed a part of the Śātavahana empire. It also confirms the connection of the Śātavahanas with the city of Banavasi. It is also the earliest inscription found at Banavasi so far. It is a valuable addition to the small number of Śātavahana and Prakrit records found in Karnataka. It is also of some significance as it mentions the practice of erecting *Chāyāprastara* or memorial stone which practice was rare. Thus from all these points of view this inscription occupies a prominent place.

Two inscriptions of the Kadambas of Banavasi have been discovered. The first is the Banavasi inscription of Mrigeshavarman discovered by the department of Ancient History and Archaeology of the Mysore University when they were excavating at Banavasi.<sup>2</sup> The inscription is written in box headed characters of the fifth century. It is written in fine classical Sanskrit. After invocation to Vishnu it speaks of Kākusthavarman, Śāntivarman and Mrigeshavarman. It refers to Mrigeshavarman's war with the Pallavas of Kāñchi. Though Banavāsi was the capital of the early Kadambas, not a single inscription of that dynasty had been found therein. This lacuna has been removed by the discovery of this inscription.

Another record of the same dynasty is the Gudnapur record of Ravi-varman. This record is important in many ways.<sup>3</sup> Firstly it mentions the names of Bandhushena and Virasharma as the father and grandfather of Mayūrasharma. The record also furnishes the location of the palace, harem, temple, dancing hall etc. Thus it will prove to be a useful guide to the excavators. Unfortunately, the correct text of the inscription is yet to be published and hence it is difficult to understand the exact significance of this inscription.

Sri N. Lakshminarayana Rao recently brought to light a very useful inscription of the Gangas of Talkād.<sup>4</sup> Its importance lies in the fact that it brings to light a hitherto unknown prince of the Ganga dynasty of Talkād, namely Śivamāra Ereyappa who is described as the *Kīrtunde* of king Śripurusha.

The next important discovery is the Harishi inscription of Rāshtrakūṭa Kannara IV.<sup>5</sup> This record was found at Harishi in north Kanara district. It is engraved on a slab in front of the Kalleśvara temple. The inscription is written in Kannada language and script of the 10th century A.D. The inscription for the first time introduces a ruling king Kannaradēva, son of Khoṭṭigadēva of the Rāshtrakūṭa dynasty. This Kannaradēva came to the throne in 972 A.D. Thus this inscription introduces a new king to the Rāshtrakūṭa dynasty. The inscription also mentions Kadamba Chattayya who was the governor of the province of Banavasi.

A large number of epigraphs have been found in recent years in Raichur and Gulbarga districts. Though the full texts of these inscriptions are yet to be published, they are important because they have brought to light a new feudatory family, called the Haiheyas. These Haiheyas were already known in North India and Andhra. But their presence in Karnataka came to light from these new records. There were two families of the Haiheyas one ruling at Morata and the other at Aralu. They were the feudatories of the Chālukyas of Kalyāna and later of the Sevunas.<sup>6</sup>

Another important inscription that throws light on the feudatory dynasty of the Guttas is the Kuppalur inscription of Sevuna Ramachandra, dated

1292 A.D.<sup>7</sup> This record extends the Gutta genealogy by one more member namely Śrīgutta or Gutta.

Many important inscriptions in South Kanara have been discovered by Dr. P. Gururaja Bhatt. Of them, the Belmannu copper plate inscription is of special significance. Belonging to circa 8th century A.D., it refers to the rule of Aluvarasa. But its importance lies in the fact that it is the earliest Kannada copper plate discovered so far.<sup>8</sup>

This resume will remain incomplete if we do not refer to the inscriptions discovered by Sri S. R. Rao at the excavations at Hampi. The Brahmi inscription discovered in the palace complex is assignable on palaeographic grounds to the first or second century A.D. if not earlier. This epigraph on a white limestone pillar, makes mention of the donation of a pillar by a devotee to a Buddhist monastery. An eleventh century inscription found here is said to provide some clues to the origin of Vijayanagara.<sup>9</sup> These inscriptions become more useful when their texts are published.

Thus this short resume gives an idea of some very significant epigraphical discoveries in Karnataka. They have either altered considerably the known facts of history or have added new historical information. In this sense the rewriting of Karnataka history becomes more meaningful and imperative.

1. A. V. Narasimha Murthy and H. R. Raghunatha Bhat; *Studies in Indian Epigraphy*, Vol. 1, p. 34.
2. *Prabhuddha Karnataka*, Vol. 54, p. 25.
3. *Srikanthika*, p. 61.
4. *Studies in Indian Epigraphy*, Vol. 1, p. 17.
5. A. V. Narasimha Murthy and H. R. Raghunatha Bhat; *Studies in Indian Epigraphy*, Vol. 2, p. 96.
6. A. V. Narasimha Murthy; *The Sevunas of Devagiri*, Mysore, 1972, p. 213-17.
7. *Indian History Congress, Summaries of Papers*, Calicut, 1976, Epigraphy Section, p. 3.
8. P. Gururaja Bhatt; *Studies in Tuluva History and Culture*, 1976.
9. *Archaeological Studies*, Department of Ancient History and Archaeology, Manasgangotri, Vol. 1, p. 110.

# KANNADA INSCRIPTION : A BRIEF SURVEY

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It is in the 3rd century B.C. that the epigraphical history of Karnataka commences with the appearance of Aśoka's Prakrit *dharmā lipi* in no less than six places, three in the Chitradurga and three in the Raichur districts. From then on for about six centuries Karnataka went through the Prakrit age, all inscriptions discovered in that age from Karnataka being in the Prakrit language. In the subsequent centuries Prakrit went out of use abruptly and its place was taken over by Sanskrit which through the centuries continued to flourish as an important epigraphical medium in Karnataka. It was in the middle of the 5th century A.D. that Sanskrit shared for the first time its pride of place as the official language of Karnataka with Kannaḍa. For, to that period in Karnataka history belongs the Halmiḍi (Hassan district) inscription of Kadamba Kākusthavarman which is as yet the earliest known Kannaḍa inscription. It will be of special interest to the people of South Kanara to know that the Halmiḍi inscription makes prominent mention of Paśupati, the earliest known Ālupa ruler of South Kanara. The overwhelming influence of Sanskrit on the diction of the Halmiḍi inscription leads us to believe that a Kannaḍa inscription anterior in date to the Halmiḍi epigraph is a historical improbability.

Though for the Kadamba period we have only one Kannaḍa inscription, the Chālukyas of Vātāpi who ruled over Karnataka for over two hundred years during the 6th–8th centuries A.D. are known to have left behind quite a few Kannaḍa inscriptions. It was during this period that at Śravaṇabelagoḷa, a Jaina centre of great antiquity, many Kannaḍa inscriptions were composed, some of them in verse. In South Kanara also Kannaḍa inscriptions in verse, belonging to this early period, have been discovered. The Rāshtrakūṭas, who supplemented the Chālukyas of Vātāpi, have left behind an even larger number of Kannaḍa inscriptions. Though like the Kadambas, and the Chālukyas of Vātāpi they used Sanskrit as the medium for writing their copper plate inscriptions, the British Museum copper plates of Rāshtrakūṭa Gōvinda III is the earliest among their charters in Kannaḍa language. At this juncture it may be pointed out that the recently discovered Belmaṇṇu

copper plate set of Āḷuvarasa II (c. 730-65 A.D.) from South Kanara enjoys the distinction of being the earliest known copper plate charter in Kannaḍa language.

The Kannaḍa inscriptions of the Kadam̐ba-Chalukya-Rāshtrakūṭa period (from the middle of the 5th to the end of the 10th century) form a fascinating subject of study. The direction of these epigraphs gives a clear historical and chronological picture of the development of the Kannaḍa language during a rather prolonged formative period. The coinage of entirely new words, the usage of Sanskrit *tatsamas* and *tadbhavas*, and the many experiments carried out in the field of grammar and syntax do indeed much credit to the intellectual capacity of the early Kannaḍigas.

With the arrival of the Chālukyas of Kalyāṇa on the political scene we enter what may be called the medieval period in Kannaḍa epigraphy. We notice in the inscriptions of those days a rapid development in palaeography which soon led to the consolidation of the forms of writing. There is, as a matter of fact, very little difference between the Kannaḍa script as found in a carefully written Kalyāṇī Chālukya inscription, say, of the period of the Vikramāditya VI (1070-1126 A.D.) and the Kannaḍa script as found today in a printed book.

Starting from the Kalyāṇa Chālukya period Kannaḍa inscriptions tend to be more and more communicative and even replace the normally informative copper-plate inscriptions as the comparatively more useful epigraphical source-material to the historians. Hundreds of Kannaḍa inscriptions belonging to the Chālukyas and Kalachuris of Kalyāṇa are written in what may be classified as *birudas*, i.e. *kāvya*s which are a mixture of prose and verse, major portions of which are devoted to the description of the royalty. An almost parallel development is seen in the Kannaḍa epigraphs discovered in South Kanara. While the early Āḷupa inscriptions are brief and contain many evidences illustrating the formative stages in the development of Kannaḍa language, the Kannaḍa inscriptions of the medieval Āḷupas which are found in larger numbers are made up of lengthier texts which yield more information on royal genealogies, official hierarchies, administrative patterns and economic, social and religious conditions in medieval South Kanara.

The Kalyāṇa Chālukya period is followed by a brief interlude known as the Hoysaḷa-Sēvuṇa era. While the Sēvuṇas have left behind some Kannaḍa inscriptions in Northern Karnataka, most of them indifferently written, the inscriptions of the Hoysaḷas are mostly carefully written, many of them tending to be very ornamental.

With the appearance of Vijayanagara inscriptions towards the end of the middle of the 14th century we enter the last phase of Karnataka epigraphy. The Vijayanagara rulers issued a large number of copper plate charters most of them in Sanskrit language and Nandināgarī characters. The majority

of their stone inscriptions in Karnataka is in Kannada. The composition as also the style of writing seen in the lythic records of the Vijayanagara period lead us to believe that, in view of the availability of other documentation media, the age old practice of recording events of importance on stone had become a mere meaningless formality. However, the practice of writing stone inscriptions discontinued even long after the destruction of the might of Vijayanagara at the battle of Rakkasataṅgaḍi in 1565 A.D. Nevertheless, inscriptions as the source of historical information lose much of their importance and indispensability after 1565 A.D. and, perhaps, even from the founding of the Vijayanagar empire in the middle of the 14th century.

# PALEOGRAPHIC PARALLELISM IN THE DAVALATRAYA AND THE HOYSALA INSCRIPTION OF 12TH CENTURY A.D.

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Though the splendid sculptural wealth and the most beautiful palaeography of the Hoysalas are wellknown through their magnificent temples, sculptures and inscriptions, no convincing example of the Hoysala paintings and painted calligraphy had been discovered until recently. Thanks to the perseverance and the art of preservation of the manuscripts by the Jaina Bhaṭṭārakas of Guru Basti at Mudbidri (South Kanara), fortunately there are some beautiful specimens of Hoysala paintings and painted calligraphy of the 12th century A.D. These painted and illustrated manuscripts from Mudbidri are the objects of worship now.

The *Dhavalatrāya* (Dhavaḷa, Jayadhavaḷa and Mahādhavaḷa or Mahā-bandha) constitutes the commentaries of the Shaṭkhaṇḍāgama. These commentaries were produced at Gersoppa in Honnavara taluk of North Kanara district, and they are said to have been the products of the 12th century A.D. This is corroborated not only by the Sravanabelāgola inscription (Sr. 43) and Kolhapur inscription but also by the contemporary palaeography of 12th century A.D. Though on stylistic grounds the workmanship of more than one artist is discernible, the general pattern is typically Hoysala. Though written in Prakrit language the Dhavalatrāya is written in usual Hoysala characters of the 12th century A.D.

The palaeography and calligraphy of the Dhavalatrāya in comparison with the Hoysala inscriptions, both lithic and metallic, are really very fascinating. Very interestingly they closely resemble the style of writing of Belur inscription (Bl. 58), and Doddagaddavalli inscription (Hn. 49), of the time of Hoysala Vishṇuvarḍhana, the most outstanding monarch of the dynasty. In fact it is very interesting to trace the parallelism in both these painted manuscript and in the stone and copper plate inscriptions of 1113-1120 A.D. to which the Dhavalatrāya belongs.



No doubt there are some differences both in the technique and in the mode of writing on the copper plates, stone slabs and on the palm leaves. The stone material that the Hoysala artists chose for engraving, was mostly of Chloritic schist variety which is comparatively soft or smooth to incise letters easily. The copper plates are also soft in nature for easy engraving with the help of steel stylus. The scribes in the case of Mudbidri palm leaf manuscripts used the lacquer ink and brushes or pens instead of stylus. Naturally the letters are rather thickened and more compact than those engraved either on copper plates or on soapstone surfaces. But still the Dhavalatraya is written with great delicacy and perfect craftsmanship (of ivory carver or goldsmith) which characterise the Hoysala calligraphy. So well balanced and proportioned are the letters that they give us an impression of printed scripts. Most of the letters are perfectly roundish with an elegant crescent or arched *topmātra* or *serif* (*talekaṭṭu*). In the case of such subscripts as *y*, *r*, we notice the fine flourishing and artistry. The half letters are also artistically written. In terms of alignment of sentences, proper arrangement of letters and their uniformity of size, the Hoysala calligraphists of the Dhavalatraya are remarkable indeed. The sweeping and the flowery lines composing the letters are really characteristic of the Hoysala style.

As far as the development of scripts is concerned, most of the letters are evolved except a few characters like *bha*, *gha*, *cha*, *la*, the use of which we find in both the Hoysala inscriptions and the Dhavalatraya. We notice

(Bēlūr 58)

ಆ ಉ ವ ಒ ಒ  
 ಕ ಒ ನ ಒ  
 ಬ ವ ಜ ರು  
 ಒ ರ ಒ ಐ ತ ಡ ಡ ನ  
 ಒ ಒ ಬ ಬ ವ ಯ ರ ವ ಕ ಒ ಸ  
 ಒ ಒ ಒ ಒ ಒ

ನಾರಾಯಣಾಯ ನಮಃ॥



(Dhavalatraya)

ಆ ಕ ಒ ಜ ನ ಒ  
 ಕ ಒ ಯ ನ  
 ಒ ಬ ರ ಒ

ಶಿವ ಶಂಭುನಾಮಃ  
 ಸುಖೋ ಜಿತಸುಖೋ ಸುಖ



the use of punctuations in both these inscriptions and manuscripts from Mudbidri. Very interestingly there is a close similarity in the majestic elephant, beautiful swan or peacock with lifted and floriated tail and innumerable floral patterns depicted in both the Dhavalatraya and Hoysala sculptures and inscriptions (See Fig.) These Dhavala manuscripts are also wellknown for their miniature paintings and decorative motifs painted in such tempera colours as red, pink, emerald green, blue and jet black. Light and shade effect in some places is also discernible.

Thus, produced at Gersoppa, the famous Jaina centre in North Kanara district, and now found in Guru Basti at Mudbidri, a living Jaina centre in South Kanara district, these Dhavalatraya manuscripts are not only significant for skilful painted illustrations but also important for the beauty of the letters as well as for the palaeographic similarity with those of the Hoysala inscriptions of the first half of the 12th century A.D.

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# VIJAYANAGARA INSCRIPTIONS

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The establishment of Vijayanagara Empire in 1336 A.D. is a landmark in the history of South India. South Kanara, better known as Tuḷunādu, itself came to form a part of the empire within a decade of its birth.<sup>1</sup> Inscriptions are the primary source for the writing of history of South Kanara of this period. There are nearly about 500 Vijayanagara inscriptions discovered so far in South Kanara and this is the largest number of epigraphs found in the region. Dated records of all Vijayanagara emperors who are known to have ruled over the empire have been found. Copper plate charters also appear in many numbers under Vijayanagara rulers.<sup>2</sup> Inscriptions of the period throw light on political, social, religious and many other aspects.<sup>3</sup> The language employed in these inscriptions is somewhat peculiar.<sup>4</sup> In this article a brief review has been made of Vijayanagara inscriptions in South Kanara.

There is no epigraphical evidence to show the circumstances which brought about the annexation of South Kanara into the empire. The Attāvara inscription of 1345 A.D. is the earliest Vijayanagara inscription found in South Kanara and it states that during the reign of Mahāmaṇḍalēśvara Vīra Bukkaṇṇa Oḍeya, Sankaradeva Oḍeya was the governor of Mangalūru Rājya and he seemed to have made a gift to a deity.<sup>5</sup> This inscription reveals an important fact that the control of the Vijayanagara Governors over South Kanara started very early. Thus in 1345 A.D. South Kanara became a part of Vijayanagara and Harihara I and Bukka I divided it for sound administration as Mangalūru and Bārakūru Rājyas. The names of the Governors, who were appointed to rule the two Rājyas are to be gathered from various inscriptions. Most of these records register gifts of land and/or money to various duties and/or brahmanas either by the emperor or by his governor or by private individuals. Two inscriptions from Kaikini, Bhatkal bear witness to the earliest recorded rebellion in South Kanara against the imperial authority of Vijayanagara.<sup>6</sup> During this period as epigraphs reveal, the Alupa power virtually came to an end in Tuḷunādu.<sup>7</sup> The Bārakūru Inscription of 1405 A.D. is an interesting epigraph, mentions an

incident of Bārakūru which proves that the people of the locality were not helpless against imperial officers when the latter were in wrong.<sup>8</sup> Between 1477 A.D. to 1512 A.D., the Vijayanagara inscriptions were absent in Mangalūru Rājya and during this period, inscriptions of many of the local chieftains are independent in nature. Thus, epigraphs prove that during this period Mangalūru Rājya was independent of the empire. Saḷuva Narasimha, who ascended the throne of Vijayanagara in 1485 A.D. did not succeed in recovering the whole of Tuḷu country. But Sri Krishnadevaraya once again brought Tuḷu country under the effective control of Vijayanagara authority in about 1512 A.D. The two inscriptions of 1512 A.D. show that the task of re-establishing imperial authority over the region had been accomplished soon after his accession.<sup>9</sup> A number of epigraphs bear much information of the later rulers. During the closing years of Vijayanagara, Keladi Nayakas were powerful in Tuḷunāḍu. Keladi Sadasiva Nayaka ruled till about 1565 A.D. and in that year Vijayanagara came to an end with the disastrous battle of Rakkasatangadi. The various inscriptions of the Vijayanagara period contain information about a number of feudatory chieftains such as Bangas, Chautas, Tolahas, Bhairarasas, Ajilas, Savantas and others.

Inscriptions of the period prove that the administration of Tuḷunāḍu was perfect. The administrative divisions that are referred to in epigraphs, are *dēsa*, *rājya*, *mandala*, *sthaḷa*, *sthaḷa nādu*, *sīme*, *nādu*, *magane*, *grāma ūru*, *chāvadi* and *guttu*.<sup>10</sup> Very often the terms *dēśa*, *rājya*, *mandala*, *sthaḷa* and *nādu* are employed in the same sense. Mahāpradhana, Dandanāyaka, Adhikāri, Sēnabhōva, grāmani, uraluva, Heggade, Srikaranea, Oḍeya, Olekara, Buddivanta and many other administrative officers are mentioned in inscriptions. A few epigraphs throw much light on (1) administration of *nādu*, (2) village administration and (3) Municipal administration. The administration of law and justice was more efficient. Epigraphs are silent about death punishment. No complete picture of the military organisation is available in epigraphs.

The social and economic life of Tuḷuvas of the period is revealed in inscriptions. The importance of aliya santana system of succession, a distinctive feature of the region, is recognised by a number of epigraphs. Names of individuals are found mentioned in the records in association with their family names as in Talahara baliya, Chautara baliya. Individual names also occur in epigraphs in association with their ancestral houses and land. The epigraphs prove that everything was done to render life in the cities and towns easy and to promote easy contacts between the various corners of the district. Inscriptions refer to the highways, roads, lands and footpaths. The Basarūr Inscription of 1455 A.D. of Mallikarjuna gives the various settlements of Muḍakeri and Paḍuvakeri of Basarūr and also mentions about trees.<sup>11</sup>

Epigraphs mention that the needs of the city dwellers were well looked after. Inscriptions divide the agricultural lands into bayalu, majalu and bettu. The division and naming of cultivated fields based on topography, form of the fields, name of the cultivator, name of the crop raised or any particular land mark, are prominently seen in the epigraphs. The various taxes mentioned in the inscriptions are adi, aruvara, hodi-kattus, jodi kaddaya, kattunderu, kula kundu, nattu, sese, siddhaya, akara, tappu, varada etc. The different weights and measures are mude, kolaga, hane, balla, kudute, sidde, malave herus, etc. The coins such as gadyana, varaha, honnu and hana are usually found in the inscriptions.

From gleaning through the inscriptions, the religious life of the people of Tuḷu country can be studied. Jainism and Vaisnavism maintained popularity as well as Saivism. Barakūru was one of the centres for all these three religious activities. The various Shaiva gods referred to in epigraphs are Markandesvara, Kotesvara, Kantesvara, Temiresvara, Nakharesvara, Nandikesvara, Tuluvesvara, Gokarnesvara, Mahabalesvara, Kundesvara, Kerumandalesvara, Somesvara, Somanatha, Virabhadra, Mahalinga, Panchalinga, Mahadeva and others. Important goddesses are Bhagavati, Durga, Hunguladevi, Mukambika, Uma and others. Vaisnava gods are Vishnumurthy, Srikrishna, Narasimha, Chakrapani, Gopinatha, Narayana, Janardhana, Tirumala, Vittala, Ramachandra, Anjaneya and others. Ganapaty, Shankaranarayana are also referred to. The Bantval (1377 A.D.) and Barakuru (1531 A.D.) Inscriptions are the evidence for existence of Surya cult.<sup>12</sup> Udupi Inscription of 1432 A.D. records the arrangement made for the offering of milk to Brahma and Naga.<sup>13</sup> Kadre (1386) and Basarūru (1531) Inscriptions prove the prominence of Natha Pantha in Tuḷunādu.<sup>14</sup> Devil worship (Bhutārādhana) was recorded in the first time. The Barakuru Inscription of 1546 A.D. mentions the line or portion of land belonging to the kottige or shed of Bobbariya, one of the popular devils of Tuluvas.<sup>15</sup> Jainism became more popular and was followed by large sections of the people and many of the local ruling families. Karakala, Mudabidure, Venuru, Keravase became centres of Jainism and a number of epigraphs praised these centres. Inscriptions revealed that the religious festivals were celebrated with great enthusiasm. It contained references to the festivals of Dipavali, Panchaparva, Sivaratri, Vasanta Yugadi, Vaishaka hunnime, Nula habba, Benakana Chauti, Tadiya habba etc. Guilds and local assemblies were more frequently entrusted with the task of protecting and administering gifts and grants made to temples, and epigraphs also throw light on temple administration.

From the geographical point of view also Vijayanagara inscriptions are equally important. Epigraphs call South Kanara Tuḷunādu, Tuḷu rājya, Tuḷu maṇḍala and Tuḷu dēśa. Inscriptions help us to know the toponymy of Tulunadu.<sup>16</sup> A number of places like Mangalūru, Mudabidure

are praised with different styles in epigraphs. The Mudabidure Inscription of 1430 A.D. says about Tuḷunāḍu as follows:<sup>17</sup>

*Sārātara drumapratatīyem parīshobīpago pratānādim  
kīramarāḷa sarasadenōppuwa nandana vrindadem paya  
pūrasara sarōjavanādim binadakkedeyada tanādim  
dāramanakke madadolavam Tuḷudesamanēka deśadol ||*

Vijayanagara inscriptions in South Kanara are noteworthy to Linguists also.<sup>18</sup> Except a few Sanskrit inscriptions, all other inscriptions are written in Kannada. When Sanskrit words are used in Kannada inscriptions, Kannada script is commonly used;<sup>19</sup> but there are also certain examples to show that Sanskrit script is used in between Kannada.<sup>20</sup> All inscriptions other than Jains are written in prose style. Jain records are either in Prose or Poem or Prose/Poem style. Poems which are used in Jain epigraphs are more impressive. Kanda, Utpalamala, Mattebhavikridita, Champakamala are the important metre used in these epigraphs. For example, in the Mudabidure Inscription of 1430 A.D., we can find the following Kanda metre.<sup>21</sup>

*Asuragiriym tenkal bhasuramesegum dharitri Bharatākhyateym  
kāsarādīgalim Tuḷudēśam kaḍurayya mādudā Bharatadolam ||*

Most of the verses in the inscriptions except Jains contain a number of grammatical errors. Words are misused: for Varanasa is used Banarase, for chatra – tsatra, for shilasasana – silasasana etc.<sup>22</sup> The importance of subscript is not realised, e.g., Gade for Gadde, Seti for Setti etc.<sup>23</sup> But in some records, subscript is used in interesting style. ಕ್ಕೆಡೆ for ಕೆಡೆ, ಫ್ಲ for ಫತ್ತ, ಒತ್ತಿಗೆ for ಹಿತ್ತಿಗೆ etc.<sup>24</sup> For writing numbers, in some cases only words or only numbers or both are practised. There are a few rare examples for special combination of words and numbers, i.e., ಷಿವರು(ಮೂವರು), ಒಂದರು (ಒಂದು) etc.<sup>25</sup> Records give equal importance to symbol words like *te* (tenkal), *ba* (badagal), *Mu* (mude)<sup>26</sup>. Regional words are commonly found in these inscriptions. For example kambaḷa, koyilu, koḷake, voṇi, etc.<sup>27</sup>

#### NOTES

1. South Indian Inscriptions, Vol. VII, No. 179.
2. The Belmannu Copper-plate of Aluvarasa (C. 8th A.D.) is the earliest Kannada Copper-plate discovered in South Kanara.
3. See Kamath, S.U., "Tuluva in Vijayanagara Times" Thesis, typescript; Ramesh, K. V. 'A History of South Kanara', Dharwar, 1970; Gururaja Bhat P., 'Studies in Tuluva History and Culture', Kallianpur, 1975.

4. S.1.1. Vol. VII, Preface iii.
5. S.1.1. Vol. VII, No. 179.
6. Karnatak Inscriptions, Vol. I, Nos. 35 and 36.
7. The Alupas were the most important of the various ruling families of Tulu-nadu who seem to have had a record of more than a thousand years of political career.
8. S.1.1. Vol. VII, No. 349.
9. K. V. Ramesh, Op. cit., p. 210.
10. P. G. Bhat, Op. cit., p. 144.
11. S.1.1. Vol. IX, P. II, No. 457.
12. Annual Report of Indian Epigraphy No. 282 (1931-32).
13. A.R. No. 382 (1928); S.1.1., Vol. IX, P. II, No. 540.
14. S.1.1. Vol. VII, No. 180; Vol. IV, P. II, No. 393.
15. S.1.1. Vol. VII, No. 366.
16. For e.g., See: S. Silva, Toponymy of Canara 1963.
17. S.1.1., Vol. VII, No. 196.
18. K. Kushalappa Gowda — A Grammer of Kannada (Based on the inscriptions of Coorg, S. Kanara and North Kanara) 1972.
19. S.1.1., Vol. IX, P. 11, No. 430.
20. *Ibid.*, No. 423.
21. S.1.1. Vol. VII, No. 202.
22. *Ibid.*, No. 371. 330 etc.
23. *Ibid.*, 331 etc.
24. S.1.1., Vol. IX, P. 11, No. 694, 446 etc.
25. *Ibid.*, No. 473 etc.
26. *Ibid.*, No. 446 etc.
27. S.1.1., Vol. VII, 333, 335, 178, 229, 323, 195 etc.

# SOME INTERESTING INSCRIPTIONAL PLACE-NAMES IN SOUTH KANARA

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The importance of place-names in understanding the regional history can hardly be exaggerated. Toponymy as a dynamic science has attracted the attention of the research-scholars and historians in different parts of the world. But, unfortunately, in India, it is still a virgin-soil and only initial effort has been made so far.

Place-name forms do vary with the passage of time. There are also other factors which contribute to the change of place name forms. For instance, phonemic changes, super-imposition of the "cultural" forms in lieu of the original forms by the invaders or the superseding powers, the process of sanskritization, substitution, authoritative changes or changes effected by legislation, and development of new local or personal names and the like. Here is an attempt to recognise the chronological variations in place-name forms that appear in epigraphical evidences.

1. **IDDYA** (Mangalore Tq. S.K.): The epigraphical name of this village is ಯೆಡೆಯ (yedeya)<sup>1</sup> (c.1389 A.D.). It is common to spell the Kannada vowel ಎ (e) as ಇ (i) in Tulu.<sup>2</sup> And, as such, in Tulu, the form ಇಡ್ಡು (Iddya) has come into being and is popularly used. In Canarese, ಎಡೆ (ede) means 'interstice, place..... between, distance, a place, a spot.....'<sup>3</sup> Hence, the name 'ಯೆಡೆಯ' may be said to have been 'an interspace between two places', namely, Kulai and Hosabettu. It has also been said that there was a pathway (which exists even today) commencing from Sultan Battery which continues touching the main road upto Kollya linking Chellāiru.<sup>4</sup> What is most interesting is that a portion of the village is still being called 'ಮಧ್ಯ' (madhya) meaning 'the middle', probably the Sanskrit version of the Kannada term 'ಎಡೆಯ', apparently the later form.

2. **SURATKAL** (Mangalore, S. K.): In the same record of 1389 A.D.<sup>5</sup> the name of the village appears as 'ಸುರುತಕಲೆ', the form which clearly indicates the influence of the local language, i.e., Tulu. In Tulu, 'ಸುರುತಕಲೆ' denotes 'the first rock'. If we start northwards from Mangalore



on sea-route, the first huge rock we meet is that of Suratkal village. Hence the name. This rock on which the Sadashiva shrine is built on the bank of the sea marks the boundary of the village. The name tells us the story of the colonists who were the first to inhabit in the locality – their occupation, caste, hardships and aspirations. The current form among the common folk of the locality is 'ತುರತಾಲ್', the name which arises very often in Pāḍḍanās.<sup>6</sup>

3. **KADIRE** (Mangalore): An inscription on the pedestal of the Lokeswara Image referring to Kundavarma Gunavālpindra, names the place as 'ಕದರಿಕಾ'.<sup>7</sup> Another record of 1386 A.D.<sup>8</sup> signifies it as 'ಭೀಗಿಕ್ಕದಳಿ'. This marks an attempt to define the term 'ಕದರಿ' associating it with 'plantain fruit' (ಕದಳಿ). The same meaning is conveyed in the next record<sup>9</sup> which refers to the place as 'ಕದರಿತೋಟ ತಿಮರು, i.e. 'a long stretch of land' (ತಿಮರ್/ತೆಮರ್)<sup>10</sup> around Kadre. An inscription of 1475 A.D. states that Kadire was the Ādithāna to Mangalūra Rājya.<sup>11</sup> Another epigraph, later one, gives us the form 'Kadire'.<sup>12</sup> From the above evidences, it can safely be inferred that the original name of the place was ಕದರಿ or ಕದರಿಕ. And if it is more often pronounced as 'ಕದೆ', it is due to the application of a popular phenomenon in Linguistics, i.e., the process of Economy.

The second-name of the place is 'Kuḍuma', now extinct, which should mean 'a hill, a rocky hill, an elevated place, mountain etc.' which has been misconceived and misinterpreted by the Sanskrit scholars in their sanskritization (Dharmasthala). The term 'Kuḍuma' is more popularly used in the case of 'Dharmasthala' (Belthangady Tq.) rather than in Kadri, though both the places are "Kuḍumas". This topographical sense is best expressed in the current name used by the people, "Kadrigudda", a perfect example for "tautology", which again will back our argument.

4. **KUKKE / SUBRAHMANYA** (Puttur Tq.): Popularly known as Kasba Kukke or Kukke-Subrahmanya, the place is named in copper plates as ಕುಕ್ಕಿಪುರ.<sup>13</sup> Kukke constitutes an important portion of Kadaba Prantya in Puttur Tq. The word "Kukke" is perhaps one of the most ancient Dravidian terms signifying 'Head, top, summit, top of the head, etc.'<sup>14</sup> The well-known hill of the place – "Śishāchala" measures as much as 5,567' in height. Thus, it is more a topographical name than being anything else. All the place-names beginning with the preposition "Kukk" (e.g., Kukkundur, Kukkehalli, Kukkikatte, Kukkujā, Kukkujadka etc.) are situated in an elevated position and invariably reveal the topography – the difference may be then in-degrees, but not at all in kind.

5. **BIDIRE** (Mūdabidure – Karkal Tq.): It has taken different forms in epigraphs – ಬಿದಿರಿ<sup>15</sup>, ವಂಶಪುರ<sup>16</sup>, ವೇಣುಪುರ<sup>16a</sup>, and ಬಿದಿರೆಯನಗರ<sup>17</sup>. The original

name of the place may be "Bidire" meaning 'bamboo' (Kan. - 'place noted for superfluity of bamboos) or 'an administration unit' ( ? ), which 'was from time to time sanskritized as ಬಿಡಪುರ or ಬೇಡಪುರ. But it should not be confused with ಬೇಡೂರು, which appears in different forms like ಯೇನೂರು<sup>18</sup>, ಯೇನೂರಬೆಟ್ಟ<sup>19</sup>, in the local records, the original form may be ಯೇ(ಏ)ಳೂರು, 'a unit or town consisting of 7 villages.'

6. **SIVALLI** (Udupi Tq.): The most ancient place in the district, Sivalli, is read differently in records - Sivalli in the most ancient copper-plate found at Mahiśa Mardini Temple of Belmannu<sup>20</sup>, dating c. 8th C.A.D., ಶಿವಳ್ಳಿಯ ಗ್ರಾಮ<sup>21</sup>, and ಶಿವಳ್ಳಿ. The village must have been, as the very name suggests, the ancient abode of God Śiva or a village inhabited or dominated by the Shaivas, the worshippers of Śiva.

7. **UDUPI** : The original form may have been ಉಡುಪು<sup>22</sup> in the understanding of which scholars disagree with each other. A record of c. 1366 A.D. refers to "ಉಡುಪಿನ ದೇವರಿಗೆ" ("to the God of ಉಡುಪು<sup>23</sup>) while that of 1396 A.D. mentions "ಉಡುಪಿನೊಳಗಣ ಕೃಷ್ಣ" (Krishna who is in Udupu<sup>24</sup>). Yet another record of 1614 A.D. spells "ಉಡುಪಿನ<sup>25</sup>" There was a time when "Udupi" formed the key-position in the 'Shivalliya-grama', a predominance which continues more or less even today. It may be argued that the name "ಉಡುಪು", the ancient nomenclature of the place, has some connection with the name of the God 'Sri Mat Anantēśvara' (Īśvara in association with 'Ananta', the Serpent-king)<sup>26</sup>, who has been hailed as the most ancient deity in the locality. The multi-names popularised by the Sanskrit scholars in their literary-works and legends, namely, 'ರಜತ ಪೀಠ (ಪುರ), ರೂಪ್ಯ ಪೀಠ, or ಶಿವರೂಪ್ಯ etc.,' are not in consonance with the original meaning the word "ಉಡುಪು" conveys.

8. **BRAHMAVAR** (Udupi Tq.): An epigraph dated 1402 A.D. refers to ಬ್ರಹ್ಮೂರ<sup>27</sup>. The other variants of the place-name are ಬ್ರಹ್ಮಪುರಿ<sup>28</sup>, ಬ್ರಹ್ಮೂರಪುರ ಹಾಳಿ<sup>29</sup>, ಬ್ರಹ್ಮೂರ ಗ್ರಾಮ<sup>30</sup>, ಬ್ರಹ್ಮೂರ ಗ್ರಾಮ<sup>31</sup>, ಬ್ರಹ್ಮವರ<sup>32</sup>, ಬ್ರಹ್ಮಾವರ ಗ್ರಾಮ<sup>33</sup> and ಬ್ರಹ್ಮೂರ. In a much earlier record of Udyavar it is spelt as ಬ್ರಬ್ಬಪುರ. From the diligent observation of the local events and history and the appraisal of the above forms, it may be argued that the place was well-known as a colony or centre of the Brahminic Culture. Even today the place continues to enjoy that prominence of various Brahmin families in and around Brahmavar. Our argument is strengthened and confirmed from a reference made in a record dated 1380 A.D., of 'a tank of the ವಿಪ್ರವಾಳಿ<sup>36</sup> (i.e., abode, place of the Brahmins). This evidence will be strong enough to nullify the argument that the village

was noted for the worship of the God Brahma – the confusion effecting from the later – Sanskritized form, “Ajapura” which has nothing to do with the original “ಛಕ್ಕಪುರ”.

1. No. 190 of S.I.I. Vol. VII.
2. cf. ಎಳೆ - ಇಳೆ; ಎಣೆ - ಇನೆ etc.
3. Kittel's Kannada-English Dictionary, Vol. I., p. 276.
4. The author is highly indebted to Sri Venkatrayachar, Vidwan, Surathkal, who has drawn his attention on this, in an interview with him, on 19-12-1976.
5. No. 190, *Ibid*.
6. The letter 'ಸ' of Kannada changes into 'ತ' in Tulu. This is usual. cf. ಸೋರೆ - ತುರೆ; ಸಾರ್ - ತಾರ್ etc.
7. No. 191 of S.I.I., Vol. VII.
8. No. 189, *Ibid*.
9. No. 195, *Ibid*.
10. Kittel, Vol. II, p. 781.
11. No. 194, S.I.I., Vol. VII.
12. No. 470, *Ibid*.
13. No. 50, 51, Kukke Copper plates, found in the Subrahmanya Temple, Kukke.
14. Lahovary, 'Dravidian Origins & The West', p. 169 & 360.
15. No. 198 of S.I.I. Vol. VII.
16. 16a. No. 196, *Ibid*.
17. No. 202, *Ibid*.
18. No. 251, *Ibid*.
19. No. 252, *Ibid*.
20. Copper Plates Discovered & Published by Dr. P. Gururaja Bhatt.
21. No. 303 of S.I.I., Vol. VII.
22. cf. (i) 'ಕೆಳದಿನೈಪ ವಿಜಯ' (A.D. 1763-1804) also spells the word as 'ಉಡುಪಿನ' (IX, ೦೦)  
(ii) Narayana Panditacharya's 'Sri Sumadhwavijayasya Bhava Prakashika' provides us an evidence that the Rajatapitapura was called ಓಡಿಪು in Apabhhrasta, i.e., in Tulu (ಫಿ.ಸ.); (iii) There are other place-names in Tulunadu like ಮಲಪ್ಪ ಕುಡುಪ್ಪ etc., which indirectly suggest the original and reliable form of the place-name 'Udupi' i.e., ಉಡುಪು > ಒಡ್ಡು
23. No. 306 of S.I.I., Vol. VII.
24. No. 183, *Ibid*.
25. No. 299 & 302, 297, 296 also.
26. Dr. P. G. Bhatt, 'ಮಲ್ವೆಯಿಂದ ಮಣಿಪಳಕ್ಕೆ' in M. G. M. College Magazine 1966-'67 (Vol. XVII); 'ಉಡುಪಿ (ಒಂದು ಒಳನೋಟ)' in ಭವ್ಯವಾಣಿ, Jan. 1972;  
'ಉಡುಪಿಗೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದ ನಾಲ್ಕು ಐತಿಹಾಸಿಕ ಪ್ರಶ್ನೆಗಳು' in Navayuga, Diwali Issue, 1970; etc.
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28. No. 357, *Ibid*.
29. No. 377, *Ibid*.
30. No. 385, *Ibid*.
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## SOME OF THE NEWLY DISCOVERED EPIGRAPHS FROM SOUTH KANARA

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The purpose of this article is to consolidate the various pieces of information culled out from the newly discovered inscriptions in the course of my investigation. This would either negate some of the existing ideas or throw extra light on the hidden events of the past. Several details provided by them help us to be better informed about the history of this region in particular but a few are important from the standpoint of Karnāṭaka history too.

To start with, in order of time and importance, we can take up an undated Āḷupa inscription recently discovered at Handāḍy, Udupi taluk. Near Government Higher Primary School, Kumragōḍu in an open place stands a stone of 3½' height and it carries information of importance of the Āḷupa period. Due to the paucity of records several events of Āḷupa history are in obscurity. One such event is the war that had taken place in the find spot of the epigraphs between Bankiyālpēndra dēva and Pāṇḍya (Pādṇa) Vijaya-dēva.

Bankiyālpēndradēva was assisted in this fight by the Pradhānās and the thousands of the village (grāma sāsirvar). But the soldiers of Pāṇḍya Vijaya-dēva had an upper hand in the fight that ensued and Bankidēva was conquered.

Though the epigraph is undated, depending upon the palaeography it can be assigned to the reign of Bankidēva II who ruled between C.A.D. 1285 and 1315.

This Bankidēva, the nephew of Virapāṇḍya<sup>1</sup> had contested the claims of Virapāṇḍya's wife and son to the throne. The fact that he might have created trouble when Ballamahādēvi was ruling is evidenced by the Brahmavar inscriptions of 1286 where he takes even the sovereign epithets together with the subordinate title Mahāmaṇḍalēśvara.<sup>2</sup> During the last years of her reign Bankidēva had set up a rival seat of power with his capital at Mangalore. But Ballamahādēvi and then her son Nāgadēvarasa continued to rule over northern portions of the kingdom from Bārahakanyāpura.

Scholars have opined that Nāgadēvarasa reigned till A.D. 1300.<sup>3</sup> But the last known date of Nāgadēvarasa from inscriptions is 1298. Dr. K. V.

Ramesh has this to say: ".....it is possible that he was finally ousted by Baṅkidēva for the latter's subsequent reign was without a rival.<sup>4</sup> But the present inscription shows that there was a rival who was prominent enough to bring about the defeat of Baṅkidēva.

Baṅkidēva who was ruling from Mangalore might have occupied the whole of Ālvakhēḍa after the death of Nāgadēva (or after defeating him) and the former is not heard of as a king after 1305 A.D. The next ruler hitherto known is Sōyidēva whose earliest inscription is from Bārakūru belonging to the year 1315.<sup>5</sup> So scholars have thought that Baṅkidēva might have ruled till that year. In that Sōyidēva's epigraph of 1315 Baṅkidēvarasa of the line (baḷi) of Dattāḷva figures as one of the donors without any royal title. To quote Dr. K. V. Ramesh "(this) inscription is very interesting but, at the same time, problematic".<sup>6</sup> He has concluded that for unknown reasons Baṅkidēva might have abdicated the throne in favour of Sōyidēva.

But the newly discovered inscription referred to above shows that Baṅkidēva was conquered by Pādṇa (Pāṇḍya) Vijayadēva. So we can rightly conclude that Baṅkidēva had lost the throne to Pāṇḍya Vijayadēva. If we carefully examine the Keṅjūru epigraph of Ballamahādēvi dated 1281,<sup>7</sup> we come across one Kumāra Bijjaṇṇa-arasa. We can identify Pāṇḍya Vijayadēva of the newly discovered epigraph with Kumāra Bijjaṇṇa-arasa or Vijayanna arasa, most probably the younger son of Ballamahādēvi. (The term 'Pāṇḍya' is used even before the name of Nāgadēva in the inscription of Mooda Alevūr.<sup>8</sup>) The protracted rivalry between Vijayadēva's family and Baṅkidēva might have provoked the former to gather an army of his own and face his cousin in the battlefield somewhere after 1305. In the combat that ensued the latter might have lost the throne and that might be the reason why he is mentioned without any royal titles in Sōyidēva's epigraph of 1315.

Since Baṅkidēva was the nephew of Vīrapāṇḍya we can think that Āliyasanthāna system was trying to make its appearance in the Ālupa family. Thus a rivalry between two systems of inheritance, matriarchal and patriarchal, and a civil war are revealed by this inscription.

Another inscription of early Vijayanagara period was discovered at Hebbāḍi Guṇḍigadde (in the paddy field of M. Narayana Shetty) nine miles away from Brahmāvar. The earliest Vijayanagara inscription from Bārakūru province is dated 1353 and this newly discovered epigraph may be placed between 1356 and 1365 for it refers to Mahāpradhānamalleya Daṇṇāyaka as the governor of Bārakūru. King Vīra Bukkaṇṇa Oḍeya (Bukka I) is given the only title Bhāṣegetappuva rāyara gaṇḍa. The purpose of this epigraph is to record a grant of land to Sōma(yya)dēva of Mūrukēri of Bārakūru given by Narasiṅga Sūḍuga. Dr. P. Gururaja Bhat has opined that Sūḍuga is the original form of Sūḍa. Sūḍa is a surname prevalent among the Nāḍavas even today and so this can be taken as one of the earliest

references to the Nāḍavas in inscriptions. Moreover the inscription under study provides the earliest reference to Sōmayyadēva of Mūḍukēri.

Son and successor of Bukka I was Harihara II and one of his inscriptions was discovered recently in a tank called Śēḍikere at Sālikēri in Vārambaḷḷi Village, Udupi Taluk. This inscription (which is used as a stone for washing clothes) is dated 1384 and records a grant to God Mahālingēśvara of Brahmāvar. He is referred to as 'Brahmōra swamy' and 'Brahmōra Hiriyaḍēvaru'. Together with the king Mahāpradhāna Muddappa Daṇṇāyaka is also mentioned which indicates the importance of the latter and moreover the grant is given by the governor of Bārakūru Jakkannaḡaḷu for the good of (uttama-vāgabēkendu) the minister as well as the king. This inscription reveals the importance of Mahālingēśvara temple in the religious life of the people of this area in those days and the record is helpful for the student of toponymy too.

One of the sons of Harihara II was Bukka II and an inscription belonging to his reign was discovered in Handāḍy village, to the south of river Sita and by the side of Brahmāvar - Bārakūr road. This lithic record is dated 1406 A.D. and it mentions Bāchaṇṇa Oḍeya as the governor of Bārakūru. This record says that Bukka II was ruling the whole kingdom from Dō(wa)-rasamudra and the purpose of this inscription is to register the construction of a tank (it still exists) there to irrigate the agricultural lands. Though it stands in the vicinity of a fort it doesn't make a mention of it. Hence it is possible to think that it was constructed later (probably in the Keladi period) and it also helps the study of village administration of Brahmāvar. In the inscriptions of Vārambaḷḷi and Chāntār, Brahmāvara is referred to as Brahmōra Moodabhāḡe and Brahmōra paḍuva bhāḡe respectively. But the inscription of Chāntār shows that the general administration was looked after by one Kallappa Nāyaka, though there were two grāmānis (grāmiṇi) for two divisions. But since this Handāḍy inscription doesn't speak of such a division we can think that this new arrangement was made after 1406.

Next ruler on the throne of Vijayanagar after Bukka II was his brother Dēvarāya I. With the joint effort of Dr. P. Gururaja Bhat and myself, an inscription belonging to the reign of Dēvarāya I, lying in the campus of the Assistant commissioner's Banglow, Coondapur was brought to light. This inscription dated 1413 records a grant given by Harihara II.

Here a word about his death. Though the scholars had agreed that Harihara II had died in the year 1404, there was difference of opinion with regard to the date of his death.<sup>10</sup> According to B. L. Rice it was August 31st whereas Dr. Venkatramanayya had put it as 16th August. But this newly discovered inscription shows that Harihara II was still alive in 1413. Hence it is possible for us now to say that the quarrel for succession took place among his sons not after his death as it is hitherto thought but during his life time

and all the three sons had come to throne one after another much before his demise.

Perhaps there is no other better record for the religious tolerance practised by the religious leaders of the time than this Coondapur inscription for the record says that Rājādhirāja Mathva Śrīpādangaḷu (who can be identified with Sri Rājarājēśvarathīrtha Śrīpādangaḷu of Palimāru maṭh) prepared (māḍikoṇḍu) Mañjunātha Purāṇa, took it to Vijayanagar and presented it to Harihara II. The inscription also speaks about the installation of Rāmadyēva and the arrangements made for nayavēdya (naivēdya) and nandādeepa to that deity. The same stone contains another inscription which records the land grant to Rāmadyēva given by Acchi Seṭṭi Nāra Seṭṭi, son of Koṭeya Kēriya Maddaṇṇa Seṭṭi.

Other two lithic records, brought to light recently, are from Chāntar (near Brahmāvara) and Bārakūru belonging to the reign of Mallikārjuna. Though the Chāntar inscription of Mallikārjuna is undated, since it refers to Rūpaṇṇa Oḍeya as the governor of Bārakūru, it can be placed somewhere between 1447-'48. It is further revealed in the epigraph that Kallappa Nāyaka was administering Brahmāvar. The inscription goes on to describe the looting of the house of Iśvara Uṅrapaḷḷi when Timmaṇṇa Oḍeya was ruling from Bārakūru. But the compensation was given during the reign of Rūpaṇṇa Oḍeya. Here the inscription unravels the fact that Timmaṇṇa Oḍeya, the governor of Bārakūru between 1442 and 1444 hailed from Chāra which may be identified with the place of the same name near Hebri in South Kanara district.

Adjacent to Bhairavēśvara shrine (near Pañchalīṅgēśvara temple) of Bārakūru, a slightly visible buried stone, when dug out and studied, supplied very interesting facts about Mallikārjuna, the Saṅgama ruler of Vijayanagar. It is dated 1468 and it says that during Mallikārjuna's reign Dēvappa Daṇṇāyaka was looking after the affairs of the kingdom. It is hitherto thought that Mallikārjuna's reign came to an end by 1465. It is also thought that he had died in that year and Virūpāksha succeeded him.<sup>11</sup> Now with the discovery of this lithic record Mallikārjuna's reign is extended by three years. The inscription proceeds to say that at the instance of Dēvappa daṇṇāyaka, Guruvappa was ruling Bārakūru rājya. Until the discovery of this inscription Viṭharasa Oḍeya was thought to be the governor of Bārakūru province between 1467 and 1478.<sup>12</sup> Now it is clear that in 1468 Guruvappa was the governor of Bārakūru rājya atleast for a short period and it is even possible that Guruvappa Oḍeya who was the governor here in the year 1459 had returned to the same office in 1468. Another important thing that we have to note in the record is that the grant is made in the presence of Mārkaṇḍēśvara dēva praying for the longevity of life of Mallikārjuna and moreover the record says that Dēvappa Daṇṇāyaka was looking after the affairs of the kingdom.

Basing upon these facts it is even possible to infer that Mallikārjuna was ailing at that time. The record tells about the grant made to Gnā(gñā)na Sāgara Śrīpādanglāu (reciding at Gope (Gōva) and its execution. Thus it helps us to revise the facts of political history of Bārakūru and of Vijayanagar.

Just a random study of either the changes or the additions of fresh information made to history by these few records is enough to show how important the inscriptions are for the reconstruction of our past, let alone an extensive and intensive survey of the nooks and corners of every village. But due to the lack of proper knowledge of the importance of inscriptions on the part of the illiterate and the sheer negligence of the elite such records are fast disappearing. The only exigent medicine which is of urgent necessity to preserve our cultural heritage to posterity is to create awareness in our public.

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#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

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2. ARSIE, 1928-'29, No. 484, Quoted by Ramesh K. V., A History of South Kanara, pp. 128-129.
3. Ramesh K. V., A History of South Kanara, p. 129 and Bhat P. G., Studies in Tuluva History and Culture, p. 23.
4. Ramesh K. V., A History of South Kanara, p. 129.
5. S.I.I., Vol. VII, No. 354.
6. Ramesh K. V., A History of South Kanara, p. 131.
7. ARSIE, 1931-'32, No. 336.
8. *Ibid.*, 1929-'30, No. 584.
9. Now in Assistant Commissioner's Office, Coondapur, S. K.
10. Shastri, K.A.N., A History of South India, p. 256.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 261.
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## AN INSCRIPTION FROM KEDINJE

P. N. NARASIMHA MURTHY, M. A.

I had an occasion to visit *Nandalike* (in Karkala Taluk), recently during which time I could find out two new inscriptions. Both are amidst rice fields, of which one is in *Nandalike* village proper and the other in *Kedinje* (*Kedinja*) village but just about two furlongs away from the Śhiva temple of *Nandalike*. For the present I have taken up only the *Kedinje* record as the other one is badly worm out.

The *Kedinje* record is in Kannada language and script. The letters are highly roundish and beautifully engraved which reflects the continuation of Hoysala characters.

The record starts with the usual invocatory verse in praise of Lord Shiva. It is dated Śaka. 1039 with the cyclic year *Prabhava*, *Āsvija* ba. 3. It states: *Srimatu Arirayara vibhada bhasege tappuva rayara gaṇḍa pūva dakṣiṇa paschima* “*Samudrādhiśvaram Śri Vīra Hariappa—Oḍeyaru Sambrajya—stayi galagiddatti.....*”. The Saka era mentioned in the record is wrong. It may be due to the engraver's mistake. The given imperial titles refer to the titles of *Vijayanagara* rulers and the King mentioned is *Vīra Hariappa Oḍeya*. The cyclic year *Prabhava* occurred once only (in S. 1309) during the reign of *Harihara II* and not *Harihara I*. Hence the given date must be corrected as Saka 1309 *Prabhava* — A.D. 1387 and the king then would be *Harihara II* who is mentioned here as *Vīra Hariyappa Oḍeya*.

It states that the *Mahāpradhāna* of the king was *Mallappa Oḍeya* who was governing *Bārakūru rājya*. *Mallappa Oḍeya* is known to have ruled over *Bārakūru-rājya* for a considerably long period (1386-1391)<sup>1</sup> with a short interval. His earliest known date is January 2, 1386.<sup>2</sup> An Inscription<sup>3</sup> from *Nilāvara* (Udupi Taluk) dated May 3, 1387 states that *Mallappa Oḍeya* was ruling over *Bārakūru*. In between had come the *Pradhāni Jakkanna Oḍeya*.

*Mallappa Oḍeya* is said to have ruled the entire *Tuḷu rājya*, *Haive* and *Konkaṇa*.<sup>4</sup> As stated elsewhere<sup>5</sup> *Tuḷu rājya* comprised of both *Mangalūru* and *Bārakūru rājyas*. Uniting two or more *rājyas* under one governor was not a rare phenomenon in *Vijayanagara* history. It only proved the ability and importance of the Governor concerned. Hence it is clear here that *Mahāpradhana Mallappa Oḍeya* was the most prominent personality during the

reign of *Vīra Harihara* (*Harihara II*) governing from his capital at *Bārakūru*, the *Tuḷu*, *Haive* and *Konkaṇa rājyas*.

The present record from *Kedinje* states in lines 8–9 that *Mallappa Oḍeya* gave away to one *Samgaṇa Jeeyyarsa* the kingdom (*rājya*) of *Dattalvara bali* (of *Dattalva* line). It is quite interesting to note that the power of *Dattalvara bali rājya* was transferred to a person whose whereabouts have not been mentioned but his name. Moreover it is also not mentioned as to who of the said ‘*bali*’ (lineage) ruled over that *rājya*. *Dattalva* (*Dattaluva II*) was an *Alupa* king, whose known dates are c. 1230–1250 A.D.<sup>6</sup> Some inscriptions after his reign mention the *Dattalvara bali*. In the opinion of scholars this lineage began due to *Alupā-santara* matrimonial relationship.<sup>7</sup> Hence in this context it can be surmised that the king of *Dattalvara bali rājya* was dead leading to a dispute over succession. *Mahāpradhāni Mallappa Oḍeya* in order to preserve peace, law and order in this part must have placed the authority (of *Nandalike rājya*) into the hands of *Samgaṇa Jeeyyarasa* (probably a subordinate elsewhere of the governor). This view gains strength as the record furnishes the names of two brothers and the concessions they obtained from the new king and the very important people of the *rājya*.

The inscription further states that when *Samgaṇa Jeeyyarasa* came (to the *Dattalvara bali rājya* – i.e. *Nandalike rājya*) the ‘*Elu bali Entu praje Jananigalu*’ (seven balis and eight praje jananis’) of *Nandalike* and the *Aruru* (*Aluru!*), *Nakharas* etc. of *Karkala* and *Koteswaralva* presented themselves and delivered the *Siddhaya* of *Salettibali* and (*Sau*) *valiya Janana*. The *Saletti bali Siddhaya* may refer to the weavers’ tax. The (*sau*) *vali Janana* may refer to the people or people’s representatives of ‘*Sivalli*’ (mod. *Shivalli* in *Udupi Tq.*) The seven *balis* and eight *praje jananis* of *Nandalike* and the *Lepada Jananis* of *Aluru* provided *Brahmadaya* lands named *Settetenni bettu* and *Kermerdaka bettu* to *Koteswaralva* and *Kadambalva* respectively. They have been mentioned as ‘*anna tammandiru*’ (brothers). It was declared that the lands were free of all imports, without any injustice and free from outside interference. *Samgaṇa-Jeeyyarasa* made this *Sarvamayna*. Out of this he made *dharma* to the Lord *Brahmesvara* of *Karkala*.

It was ordained that the two brothers should provide every year six *muras* of paddy at three *Khandugas* calls to the *Brahmana* who recites *Purana* to the Lord *Brahmesvara* during the month of ‘*Srāvaṇa*’. The record states that a fine of 500 *gadyanas* has to be paid to the king and 250 *gadyanas* to the lord if the *Naḍu* goes against *aḍaka* (contract). If *Koteswaralva* goes wrong he should pay a fine of ga. 500 and ga. 250 to the king and god respectively. Whosoever goes wrong would be committing the sin of killing the most beautiful cow of Karnataka at *Varaṇāsi* (*Varaṇasiyalli Kannarati Kavileya konda dōsamaliya adakakke niluvaru*).

The point to be noted here is the mention of *Brahmīśvara* of Karkala. *Peruvaje* (*Pervaje*), a hamlet of Karkala now has a Shiva temple the existence of which goes back to even an earlier period. The name *Brahmeśvara* may refer to the deity of this temple only. An inscription from *Miyaru* (of 1385 A.D.) refers to *Miyaru Mahadeva*. *Miyaru* is a village close to Karkala. The tradition is that the temples of *Peruvaje* and *Miyaru* were constructed almost at the same time. As the record in view also belongs to the same period (1387 A.D.) our conjecture is that the *Pervaje* temple lord was called by the name *Brahmeśvara*. (This temple has, outside its *prakara* two inscription slabs which are completely worn out.)

The record was written by *Viṭṭamaṇa*, the *Senabova* of *Samgaṇa Jeerayarasa*.

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# INAUGURAL ADDRESS

Dr. K. S. KARANTH

*Honourable Scholars, Delegates and Friends,*

I know fully well that I am not a competent person for undertaking a function like inaugurating a Conference of scholars like the present one. This honour has been thrust on me, by the reception committee because of their regard for me. It is true that I am interested in epigraphy in a very general way. If I fail to do justice to the expectations of my friends, they have to blame themselves for the wrong choice they have made in requesting me to inaugurate this Conference.

In India epigraphy has revealed to us the contents of many inscriptions and much written matter from Aśokan times. We have little or no such written evidence for periods that go back to the vast era that embraces the Indus Valley Civilization. Conjectures based on a few letters and words written on Mohenjo-daro seals are very much open to doubts and criticism. For instance the so called 'Unicorn' on Indian seals is exactly like the ones to be found in Sumeria. It is no unicorn at all but only a profile figure of the West Asian type of cattle, that has no hump like the Indian bull.

As for reading of the seals – interpretation of words through fixing the meaning of pictograms, is a hazardous venture, when we are not conversant with the language that prevailed in the Indus valley. It is said to be earlier than 'Indo Aryan'. It is said to be a 'Pre-Sumerian' language that was the parent of 'Pre-Dravidian' languages like Basque, Kaffir and some early Mediterranean dialects. That is why scholars of early languages and extinct languages are reluctant to accept the readings of some of our venturesome archaeologists.

Now let me turn my attention to some other point. This is about the attempt to decide chronology on the basis of the shape of alphabets that we find in our country. For this – we have to select inscriptions of exactly known periods, where time is not in doubt. When such materials are gathered from a vast Kannada speaking area like Karnataka a particular alphabet need not have evolved into a specific shape, all over the area during a chosen century. Say the alphabet *ra*, *pa*, *ha* or some such thing. Are we sure that

over the entire Karnataka country evolution of their shapes was identical ? If we look into the written script of Kannada, slightly prior to the days of printed type and also some time after it – we find that letters like *ha*, *pa*, *ka*, *kha* and some others are written differently ! There is a need to chart out a *reference card* for assuring the sameness or difference giving the even or uneven distribution of alphabetical shapes.

When in an area we find two written languages with different scripts the matter may become more complicated. An authentic guide chart, based on *inscriptions chosen* from the wide spread areas, known definitely for the authenticity of period, may go a long way towards inferring dates from the shape of alphabets. For this – the original copies alone of such inscriptions will have to be used as guides.

Then comes the question of inferring words from written inscriptions. Here the knowledge of the dialect of a particular locality and people is necessary. When inscriptions refer to local customs, rituals and social patterns of a specific area, terminology could never be the same, during different times, in different parts of Karnataka. Sitting on the armchair, and possessing knowledge of old or literary Kannada, will not suffice. In a bilingual area, it becomes a more difficult task to render the correct meanings.

I have a feeling that our historians often betray their regional sentiments. The Karnataki epigraphist or historian portrays the glory of his regional past while the Tamilian is swayed by the glorious past of Tamilnad. If we realise that our Kings carried their sword and waged wars incessantly against all sorts of neighbours, inscriptions become written glorifications of one's own kings and their prowess. Kings who were their enemies always became poor specimens. Even our religious sentiments, prejudices etc., have often led to readings that facts don't justify. Besides we often confuse history and mythology. Both are same to us.

If we want to seek the aid of epigraphy to write the History of a particular ruler – we should first go through all relevant inscriptions – spread over his own Kingdom, as well as those lands over which he strode ! We must ascertain what other people who suffered under him say ! For writing the history of a Kannada ruler, references to him in Telugu, Tamil and other areas, where people spoke a different language have to be consulted.

Local patriotism, partiality for one's own language, sect etc., are bound to pervert fair judgement about matters connected with the interpretation of inscriptions.

Another point that may look insignificant is the havoc caused by weathering of inscribed stones. These stones may be schists, granites or sandstone or basalt having different crystalline or metamorphic structures. Weather affects them differently and they chip off differently. Hence reading a weather-worn or chipped alphabet becomes a risk. If a whole letter or

word is gone you show it by a blank. But when part of a letter has chipped of how do you assume its nature? In Kannada O can be ಓ if the chipping comes at its top. Kannada numeral ೦ can be ೦, ೩ can be ೩ and so on. All inscribers were not scholars. Even when the composer of an inscription is a scholar the inscriber is a lay craftsman. Hence errors committed by him, added to weathering can cause trouble in making out what a particular alphabet is. In determining it – the nature of a local word, dialect, spelling etc., will count a lot.

I have been observing our Historians blindly accepting published, printed versions of old inscriptions as it is easy. One should take pains to get at the very original inscription or imprint – instead of an earlier printed version whose correctness goes unchallenged for long.

I feel that Government has been very slack in the matter of collecting the so many inscriptions that lie about in all corners of Karnataka. Lack of funds is no excuse. Dr. Gururaja Bhat single-handedly has shown us the vast number of inscriptions that the department of archaeology has ignored.

Even with regard to the already published materials I am sure many have vanished by now. They might have been used as stepping stones of a nearby cottage. Let me narrate to you one such example. In my studies of Yakshagana – I quoted a particular inscription namely A.R.No. 212 of 1913. This inscription is said to be embedded on the wall of the Laxminarayana temple at Somasamudram in Kurugodu. Since I felt impelled to consult the very original, I requested my friends to locate the same. My friends reported to me that there is no Laxminarayana temple either in Somasamudram or Kurugodu. A second attempt was done with the same result! I went there personally later in 1975. People in Somasamudra told me that there was no such temple. When I roamed about its streets, and queried a middle aged villager he showed me a site where the temple once stood. He also said that the temple stones were removed and out of them a Hanuman temple was built. This happened after 1913. Some one pointed to me a thick slab used for a step in that Maruti temple. It seemed to be too thick to have been embedded in a wall. At the old site there was another slab, used now for churning plaster !

With disappointment I came back when some one out of pity sent for me. He took me to his house and showed the inscribed slab, that is now the base of mortar !

This makes it imperative to specify where the inscriptions lie, their size and nature of the stone; so that when in need a scholar can consult the original.

This consultation is necessary when honesty is lacking in reading of the inscriptions and scholars have tampered with earlier writings as in Chandravali.

So Sir, after adding my own doubts and suspicions regarding the materials you deal with, and having bored you enough, let me declare your Conference open. I hope it will be an interesting and enlightened session shedding new light or lights, on this all important science.

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